The International Crosby Circle Presents

50th Anniversary

BING THE MASTER

Edited by REG BRISTO

Bing at his beloved Pebble Beach Jan.1966

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When information is required it would be appreciated if a stamp or SAE is enclosed.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

BING

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS:

	Page.		Page
Editorial..	4.	Lines from Leslie Gaylor.	24.
"Keeping Track" - record news.. BERT BISHOP.. ..	6.	Bing on the Box: radio & TV appearances by BERT BISHOP.	30.
Trading Post	17.	Picture: Bing & Michael Parkinson.	31.
BINGPICS..	19.	Readers' Letters:	44.
The Birthday Game! by John Bignell.	22.	Startling addition to KEEPING TRACK..	48.

IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT!

Whether or not Bing IS going to make some public appearances this year is a subject of over-riding interest to members. Alas, as we go to press with this Spring issue of 1976, there is conflicting news. I have been told such appearances are 99 per cent certain; and you will read that things have got as far as a British impressario talking to Bing in America - and Pete Moore being asked if he will act as Musical Director for Bing on the venture. On the other hand, I have also been told that the event is by no means certain at this stage.

BUT, it has been suggested, by a reliable source, that it would be an excellent idea to ascertain how many tickets the members of ICC would be likely to require. It seems the organisers would certainly want the ICC members to be sure of such tickets. For that reason, therefore, a slip is enclosed with this issue (home members only, of course) on which they can indicate their probable requirements.

> THIS IN NO WAY IS A GUARANTEE OF TICKETS - ANY MORE THAN IT IS A GUARANTEE YOU WILL ACTUALLY WANT THE TICKETS - e.g. no venue has been mentioned, and no dates either so it is all a bit "in the air". It is merely an advised exercise to ascertain what ticket requirements would be for the ICC membership. I do not want to be offered a parcel of tickets without knowing approximately at least how many are required. Similarly, I cannot possibly turn down tickets unless I know they are in excess of what we may require. There is every reason to believe an approach on these lines will be made to us. May I, therefore, suggest that all members who would want tickets for themselves and/or their families &c. fill in the slip and return to me, enclosing a SAE - just in case I have to get some urgent news to you before the next issue of BING is due. MARK YOUR ENVELOPES "TICKETS" IN THE TOP LEFT-HAND CORNER OF THE ENVELOPE

And remember; this is an advised exercise. It is still in the lap of the Gods as to whether the events will yet take place. But at least, we shall be prepared - and not miss the chance of a lifetime!

EDITORIAL

This issue has been produced in face of a certain amount of domestic disorganisation. All is well now, thank you, but it has resulted, I'm afraid, in a number of errors creeping in - some amusing, some irritating, none, I hope, baffling! And I am certain the CONTENT hasn't suffered.

Mail indicates that members are still basking in the extraordinary Crosby events of 1975. A truly remarkable period indeed for us dichard devotees of the Old Maestro. And now, already in 1976, the action continues - to coin a phrase! There is news herein of Bing already recording again in great style; definitely coming to Britain again in the late Spring - and perhaps to make his concert appearances! As you will see from the slip enclosed, there is no concrete news as yet - but we feel the news at least warrants us endeavouring to find out ticket requirements of our members should a concert or concerts really come to pass. But I hasten with a cautionary note: do not get too optimistic. I think you remain QUIETLY optimistic, however!

About this time last year Bing was making his records in Bond Street with Ken Barnes and Pete Moore....and in our local shops you might pick up albums BING 'N' BASIE, and THE SPECIAL MAGIC OF BING CROSBY - if you were lucky. And they could be anywhere in the shops - under Male Vocalists, Nostalgia, Memory Lane...and they had to be looked for...diligently. And our local shops were particularly depressing in this respect.

Just the other day, however, the new aspect struck me all over again: now there is a complete BING CROSBY "browser" - and in addition to the two albums just mentioned, are displayed ———

This is Bing Crosby (RCA double-set)
Couple of Song and Dance Men.
The Best of Bing (EMI/MCA)
Blue of the Night (MFP)
Many Happy Returns. (Vocalion)
Bing and the Andrews Sisters double.
Special Magic of Bing and Louis.
That's What life is All About.
Bing Sings the Great Songs (EMI/MCA)
Southern Memoir.
Great Country Hits. (Capitol)
Favourite Melodies (Windmill)
Bing Goes Latin (MGM)
The Autobiography 5-album set.

That's our local shop! In the really big, specialist shops, of course, you will find the Biography, the Totems and goodness knows what else - Joker, Jazzum &c. From WORLD RECORDS one can order the 7-album set, THE VERY BEST OF BING CROSBY!

Perhaps a few of you are raising your eyebrows and musing on BLUE OF THE NIGHT (MFP)... this made a very surprise appearance just as this issue was being folded up; but space had to be found for it. This is the Buddy Cole record - tho' oddly enough, no mention is made of this fact on an otherwise striking and delightful record-cover. One of the effects of this new budget issue is that you can play the two songs, GEORGIA ON MY MIND with Bing and Paul Smith, and GEORGIA ON MY MIND, with Bing and Buddy Cole! Any similarity is slightly miraculous.

But we mustn't jest; the shops are reflecting the welcome and always expected resurgence of the great Bing. And let us never forget the main inspiration has come from people in this tight little island of ours - Ken Barnes, Pete Moore, and the good people at United Artists. And their great work has inspired the other companies to get Bing to the fore again with their record reissues. A very happy and rewarding situation indeed. Yes, always expected: we have remained supremely confident that Bing could still assume his rightful place in accomplished fashion - and at a time when men of his age are usually reluctant to leave the fireside! Younger than Springtime, indeed.....

———

Your Editor, Reg Bristo, and all our prime contributors, e.g. BERT BISHOP, JOHN BASSETT (at the moment otherwise engaged with bringing up baby!), LESLIE GAYLOR, BOB ROBERTS, and others wish to thank all those who remembered them with Christmas greetings.... So many kindly-inspired people. It was greatly appreciated.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE ----

We hope members will approve the dignified simplicity of the cover; it is one of your Editor's favourite pictures of Bing - taken, as you can see, just ten years ago.

A unique combination of aloofness, geniality, elegance, dignity! Yet it could be fun imagining what Bing's thoughts were! Some suggestions -

(i) "If they don't come soon, I'm off.....could do with some tea..."
(ii) "If he makes that putt - I'm Frank Sinatra...."
(iii) "Mary Frances IS a lovely girl....."
(iv) "Pity to leave this, but it'll be nice in England again....."

See what you can do!

The picture of Bing with the girl, golfing at Sunningdale, just had to be included, despite not having the original and having to rely on the newspaper picture kindly sent in by MR. L.B.Hayes, of Slough. This picture didn't appear in the national papers, as far as is known, but it is certainly one of the happiest pictures one could wish to see, whether it be Bing or anyone else. Happily, of course, it is Bing....and I defy anyone to look at the picture and not smile involuntarily! That girl is really convulsed - goodness knows what happened to the stroke she was making when Bing made his "golden oldie". There is genuine, uninhibited, unrestrained mirth! Our acknowledgements to the photographer, Mr. Kent Gavin. It appeared in a Staines/Slough paper, local of course, to Sunningdale. Actually, I believe the mirth was caused by some torn pants - but I'm certain it was not vulgar! A lovely picture which hasn't come out too badly, I'm sure you will agree.

We're indebted to Bert Morton again, for the Bing/Parkinson picture - and for its reproduction. Another happy picture and a reminder, if it were necessary, of a wonderful event in Crosbyana.

Some small "errata": In KEEPING TRACK, I think page 12, we've listed MISSISSIPPI MUD-2 twice; the second version should read "-3". Take three, that is. Somewhere else we've used the word "elegic" when we meant "eulogic"!

And did you say that gorgeous letter in one of the papers: it read -

"I am eighty-two and I STILL think Bing Crosby is lovely despite his big ears. He has a grand voice. — O.A.P. Elterwarer, Westmoreland."

Pity the address is so cryptic: I'd love to send her this BING. Anyone guess the lady's identity?

As you will read, Bing is already recording again...and the show-tunes album will be out soon...the new single already is, from a letter this morning...

Mike Crampton has forwarded (at last!) the taped message from Bing that was just too late for the big meeting last September! It is so interesting that your Editor has painstakingly transcribed it word for word and it appears late in this issue. It will be of interest to all - especially Yorkshire readers! So late did it come that it does not appear in the list of contents....

I wonder if we'd have NOTICED the big ears...if Bing didn't keep talking about them?

All those readers who took the trouble to write most interesting letters are warmly thanked; all of them should be appearing but I'm sure the pressure on space will be appreciated. Incidentally, Bing says in his tape it was the first time he had been to Yorkshire - but he misremembers! As you can see from KEN MERRY'S letter page 51....

KEEPING TRACK - KEEPING TRACK - KEEPING TRACK - KEEPING TRACK - KEEPING TRACK - KEEPING TRA

The feature designed to keep members comprehensively up-to-date with the continuing appearance - and re-appearance - of Crosby records. The main contributor is once again the ubiquitous:

BERT BISHOP

Before proceeding to the "newer ground" it should be mentioned that mail to the Editor, and other contributors, indicates that the seven-album set THE VERY BEST OF BING, issued towards the end of 1975 by WORLD RECORDS, has been very well received indeed. True, there were a few "wails" that some of the more obscure, and therefore, much in demand earlier tracks, were not included. But, it is always thus in the case of a collection. Generally, however, the set has been received as a massive contribution to countless Crosby collections - both as regards repertoire and technical reproduction.

If any readers, particularly newer ones, have not yet purchased this great set, they are reminded they can, in the time-honoured super-market phrase, get "£1 off" the retail price of it by writing to the Editor for a proclaiming him or her to be a member of the ICC. This should be used when PAYING for the set. It is readily accepted by WORLD RECORDS and is a privilege for our members only. So, to more recent record news:

A SOUTHERN MEMOIR: DECCA (LONDON) CAT. NO. SHU8489. STEREO: ALSO AVAILABLE ON CASSETTE & CARTRIDGE.

A lot of water has flowed along the old Mississippi since this album became available to the UK record-buying public last December. It came just too late to permit a review in the Christmas issue of BING (we had to make sure you got it by Christmas!) though it will be recalled the tracks were noted along with the catalogue number. It would be totally remiss, though, if a longer look were not afforded this issue, for this January 1975 recorded collection of Southern songs is pre-eminently splendid. One might almost say Cap'n Crosby has taken a twenty-year trip back in time to recover a second treasured volume of NEW TRICKS; indeed, three of the tracks on that beautiful Buddy Cole Trio accompanied album are refurbished for this mostly updated riverboat medley.

A personnel change gives us twelve musicians for the two sessions of the 16 and 21 January, but there were ten only featured on any given track, led by the versatile pianist-conductor Paul Smith. As Bing points out in his sleeve notes "conversation" with Geoff. Milne of Decca not all the arrangements are ultra-modern, which results in a happy blending of period and style. One doesn't have to listen too hard to discern echoes of Kenton, Cole, Shearing and, as mentioned and still playing thus - Guy Lombardo. The songs are all old standards, so we can only be concerned here with the interpretations:

ON THE ALAMO: The entire crew cast off at a steady pace with this, but it is at once apparent who is commanding the bridge. Bing's voice has volume and tonal quality, sending reverberating ripples in the wake of the unobtrusive conventional backing of piano lead with full line-up easing in on the chorus and middle bars. A very pleasant if rather temperate start

ALABAMY BOUND: An overland journey begins, it would seem, in Indian territory; the band creating initial excitement by this novel introduction. Bing carries the lyric along for most of the way, pausing only for a few bars while the musicians work up a fair head of steam. Indeed, Bing is obliged to call them to a halt at the conclusion with an interpolated line in typical Crosby style.

WHERE THE MORNING GLORIES GROW: Very easy on the ear, and Bing is; on might almost say this is a band number with vocal. Paul Smith plays honky-tonk pieano over Bing's deceptively easy-sounding couple of repeat choruses, whilst in the middle sixteen bars are devoted to the sleeve-noted sendOup of Guy Lombardo. It is all pure corn but so likeable as to be, arguably, the best track on Side 1.

STARS FELL ON ALABAMA: Bing is never out of the limelight, however, with this number and he creates a superb interpretation of the Mitchell Parish lyric to this very melodious song. The wonder is that he has never recorded it before.

CAROLINA IN THE MORNING: A slightly more aggressive approach carries us through this, mainly from the band, though Bing is strong on the vocal and ends rumbustiously, if somewhat in mid-air. A rather off-beat track at its best when steering a conventional course.

SWANEE: Brings no slowing down for the landing stage for the first half of this musical journey. In fact the tempo builds up and maintains a fast pace throughout. Bing is truly in 50's form for an excellent vocal and Paul Smith really goes to town with some hot piano in the middle section. Carried along on the keyboard are snatches of LOVE IN BLOOM, and I FOUND YOU in a very satisfying all round interpretation of one of Al Jolson's biggest hits. - but, you ain't heard nuthin' yet!

WAY DOWN YONDER IN NEW ORLEANS: heads off Side 2 and has Bing and band in fine fettle for another "Jolie" speciality, though neither suffer by comparison. There's a lot of allusion to Dixieland jazz in words and music, with the usual "La Paloma" Latin-beat verse linking a couple of rousing choruses.

GEORGIA ON MY MIND accounts, perhaps, for the mutiny which occurs during this Hoagy Carmichael musical soliloquy. Bing and band go their separate ways with the former sticking steadfastly to the spirit of the composition but losing out to the rapid and abrasive beat of the band. Never one to argue, Bing shrugs off the confrontation by an "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" attitude for the final few bars.

CRYIN' FOR THE CAROLINES: The band settles down to a more acceptable though modern arrangement, and Bing handles this moody song in traditional style, but is just slightly overpowered by the back up. Perhaps the only track where the balance is not in his favour.

SHE IS THE SUNSHINE OF VIRGINIA: Out of the dolrums for this; a pacy track that speeds along with a bouncy arrangement. It is primarily a band number; the lyric is rather weak, anyway, but Bing sings it cosily and contrives to have the last word in a strong solo finish.

SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH: Cruising along with a faultless interpretation that must surely have the shade of the late-lamented Louis enquiring: "Who dat boy?", both Bing and the band capture the full flavour of this dreamy southern ballad. Its a firm favourite with me, and several other members have expressed their great enjoyment of this track. Its certainly a gentle and melodic run into the last broad reach; "steaming for Baltimore".

SAILING DOWN CHESAPEAKE BAY: In one glorious burst of rassamatazz the entire ensemble, and Bing especially, completely capture the redolence of river-boat days and places as portrayed through the media of films, books, and vintage recordings. Musical hokum it may be but it makes a real wing-ding finish to a melodious album that takes in many great standards from the repertoire of the deep southland. "May I ask, Cap'n Crosby, sir, when do we leave for the return trip?"

Decca are to be congratulated on successfully negotiating for these recordings, with Bing Crosby Enterprises. The release on their London label of this album is a major event for Bing - and us - and their Press Office is satisfied that it will remain a good catalogue LP for a long while. Certainly the sleeve is an eye-catcher with its paddle-boat background in shimmering blue-green, and "The Skipper" sharp as a tack in his Mississippi rig. Geoff Milne handles the sleeve write-up from a personal interview with Bing. Recording dates and credits, including every member of the band, are given as appropriate and Bing sets the seal on both sides by a blow-up of his full signature. It nudges very hard for the best Bing album of 1975 - but, the opposition is pretty spectacular as well!

Editor: Hmmmmm....I'm sure Bert won't mind my remarks complementing his, as always, comprehensive and well-turned review. And in the process show that while BING exists solely in honour of the peerless Mr. Crosby it does not follow we need to be uniformly elegiac about every album. Surprisingly to me at least, Bert suggests it may be the best album of 1975.....not for me, alas. That Bing is so formidably back in the recording field must, of course, be a

delight to us; certainly to me. But I cannot jump up and down in excitement with this album. It was beautifully conceived - but, to my ears, the reverse in execution. By the band. I feel that this kind of album must tend to make the late Jack Kapp turn in his grave.

"Modern" recording; modern arrangements! Does this mean that the arranger discards pp. and knows only ff? That legato, moderato, "with feeling" have disappeared from the modern arranger's musical ken? I fear it must mean that. I defy anyone to instance any passage on this album where the slightest feeling is shewn; where the band-volume slips from the double-forte - and where Bing isn't, mostly, fighting the battle that, it is true, Bert mentions in respect of at least one track.

This, undoubtedly is what that weird British critic meant when, referring to THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT, said "despite a weedy British orchestra". He clearly meant one like this on the SOUTHERN MEMOIR tracks. Fortunately, very fortunately, many of the numbers need this sort of treatment; but even conceding this they could still have been done with considerably more taste.

And has nobody a good word to say for GEORGIA ON MY MIND? I fear not. Certainly not me; it is an unmitigated disaster. I come back to my remarks on "modern" arrangers: don't they know what the lyric says? Doesn't Paul Smith KNOW, after all these years of listening to the lovely Carmichael song, that is a song of wistful yearning? To be delivered with the utmost feeling. Instead, he conceived it as a frantic, agitated, affront to the ears. I heartily concur with Bert Bishop when he is of the opinion that Bing clearly gives up - and adds his bit to the holocaust - no doubt with a wry smile at its conclusion.

CRYIN' FOR THE CAROLINES is one of the more restrained numbers - but even in saying that, the band still ploughs along at the same immoderate jarring volume. As I am now tired of saying, the job of balancing up after making a multitude of tracks of the same number concurrently must be held to blame: we get the sound a "modern" sound-mixer or producer likes. I would actually go back to a mike or two for the band - and one for Bing, and see how that sounds. SUNSHINE OF VIRGINIA is a tatty little song, but oddly, gets the nearest to a "restrained" accompaniment - but why oh why does Paul have to keep breaking the rhythm? From bebop to Latin-American, traditional - and on times, no discernible beat at all.

How I long for "sweet" reeds, glissando trombones, tuneful if not muted trumpets; a rhythm section that plays with a degree of finesse, and doesn't thump its way through every number as if it were playing in a Harlem stomp-off. And what about a string passage occasionally?

Oh yes, I will make a small concession to DOWN SOUTH. That comes near to a bit of feeling, though I felt some of the chord changes were suspect, harmonically.

For me, although Ken Barnes's finished product verged on some of this criticism, by and large the London recordings are infinitely superior to these.

A further word on "feeling" for a song; manifestly, one doesn't expect a song to be "acted". But regard to the song's purport should always be taken into account. I am reminded of how Frankie Laine in the 50's used to belt out COOL WATER as if had just downed a gallon or two of Guinness and thirst was the last thing on his mind. By contrast, in those "unmodern" days, Bing delivered that song with just the right, almost exquisite, air of longing for cool, clear, water - just as the song surely demands.

On this showing, Paul Smith is ill-advised to send-up anyone, leave alone Guy Lombardo, who has been leading a highly successful orchestra for about 50 years - and still is. And has a name, and a reputation, that Paul Smith is in no danger of emulating. I would express the wish that Bing HAD been accompanied by Guy Lombardo....one would have been spared the ordeal, on listening to the album, as to what the heck was going to happen next! I was inclined to jump up and down in anticipation of Bing's Latin-American album for readers may know I have a great weakness for the lovely songs and rhythms of South America. Experience has shewn me, however, that if the accompaniment is entrusted to a non-South American, the result is seldom - Latin American. I fear Paul Smith's worst..... I don't expect many, if any to agree with me. But I feel there is another side of the coin in regard to this album. Come back to London, Bing..... - or use Bill Justis again!

(Cont.

Now what have I done? Totally misconstrued the concept of the album - a riverboat medley? Well, perhaps but in that case perhaps the numbers could have suffered a change of pace and mood. Perhaps an old-fashioned ballad version of OL' MAN RIVER, with none of the deep notes skirted? However, it is fairly certain I shall be assailed for these sentiments, so let me make myself quite clear before pens are violently wielded in defence: I think Bing sounds great, but I think he has to battle against the accompaniments most of the time. My simple query is: why should that be? I've already mentioned Justis; I've mentioned I prefer Ken Barnes/Pete Moore's sterling work with Bing (already continuing, happily) - and for good measure, I like the HEY JUDE which is seldom remarked these days. That contained melody and change of pace and Bing NOT swamped by the accompaniment. Reluctantly, I must declare that, to date, Paul Smith offers a strong challenge to Buddy Bregman as my unfavourite accompanist. One last thought, however - Paul does sound uncannily like the late Buddy Cole in places. In fact in one introduction - what was it now? - oh yes, STARS FELL ON ALABAMA, I would have said it was the same PIANO even! And now, hoping BERT BISHOP has forgiven the interpolation, here is Bert continuing with KEEPING TRACK:

A COUPLE OF SONG-AND-DANCE MEN: UNITED ARTISTS CAT. NO. UAS 29888

With the release of this album featuring Bing and Fred Astaire there arises the possibility that a record has been established by the approximate 150 years that these two top performers tally between them as duettists on one album - and representing, too, a hundred years plus as regards experience of entertaining the world. But, no undue harping on the age factor though it becomes rather relevant when one considers the sheer and total enjoyment that the album presents, whether LP., cassette, or cartridge. From the charming photographs on front and rear sleeve it is at once apparent that there were never two more lively and likeable popular male artists - both still going strong.

And, another handsome sleeve to whet our never-satiated appetites that resolves the TOP BILLING problem posed by the Ken Barnes-Pete Moore song by reversing the names and faces on front and rear - the subject of no little humorous manoeuvring in the studio we understand. The front sleeve picture is the one in question, and is particularly appealing have been taken at the session and showing members of the orchestra backing up the headliners as they repose in their "star" chairs. The photo of Fred on the rear sleeve was taken at the same time but the one of Bing is a 'Parkinson' rehearsal BBC photo and has already been featured on the RCA double LP THIS IS....BING CROSBY. Song title details are copious and credit is given to just about everyone concerned, including the ICC's own star member, LESLIE GAYLOR.

ROXIE: commences the album, and comes from the musical production "Chicago". The title relates to a lady of that name: perhaps rather brash, for this is how the "opener" comes over - and might have had more impact if the show had been seen here. Following hard on its heels is the much more likeable

TOP BILLING: the lyric of this cleverly descants on the obvious theme. The multitude of ad lib comment is a special feature of this collection and it first comes to the fore in this number. Rather amusing is the use of one of Bing's anecdotes relating to autograph hunters where Fred comments: "You've always been a fan of mine....I mean, I've always been a fan of yours!" A well-written and orchestrated number that might well have filled the No 1 spot.

SING: The Johnny Evans Singers provide the required vocal backing for the Joe Raposo favourite. Messrs. A and C ride along real easy, making it the only straight duet on the album. The arrangement is excellent; full of musical expression but it leaves one well aware that the album wouldn't have been so successful if comprised of twelve similar tracks. Nevertheless, a pleasant duet.

ITS EASY TO REMEMBER gives Fred the first solo spot, his choice in the musical exchange of songs introduced by each other in films. Bing sang this in MISSISSIPPI. Astaire has a light voice, but always offers impeccable delivery in a unique style; but one must say that for maximum enjoyment on this album it would be best not to remember how Bing sang it. But, that was long ago.....

IN THE COOL, COOL, COOL OF THE EVENING: It would be impossible for Johnny Mercer and Hoagy

Carmichael to jointly compose anything but a good song and with this number we have the most well-known one associated with Bing. Its always been a favourite set-piece for his shows, and first came to attention in Bing's film HERE COMES THE GROOM. It is again well featured here, having all the ingredients required to make it swing - including the choral backing.

PICK YOURSELF UP: the most ambitious track on the album comes with the first half "closer" in which Bing and Fred blend with the band in a super arrangement of one of the hit songs from SWINGTIME. I don't know who has the most fun here, but I'm inclined to come down in favour of the listener. The Jerome Kern melody and Dorothy Field lyric could not wish for a happier interpretation, and Bing's ad lib comments fly thick and fast, culminating in an invitation to Fred to avail himself of singing lessons from Bing. Having just been taught the rudiments of tripping the light fantastic through life by the fleet-of-foot master it seemed a fair exchange of talent!

HOW LUCKY CAN YOU GET? comes from the film "Funny Lady" and opens side two. The lyric is entirely suitable as a second half reminder of the special features of the album which are good songs, well sung and with plenty of humour. The 'vo-de-oh-do' beat and chorus backing makes for a mildly ragtime treatment of this jazzy duet.

A SHOOTING BOX IN SCOTLAND: Most members will have read of the 'discovery' by Ken Barnes of this song, a favourite Cole Porter tune of some considerable vintage - 1916. It contrives to be a truly delightful discovery indeed and, here again, the typical Porter lyric - always clever - has never ever been in such good hands - or perhaps I should say voices. The amusing pay-off when our two gents reveal they are really 'gentlmen of the road' highlights the sparkling humour of this album.

CHANGE PARTNERS: brings Bing's turn for the musical exchange with, aporpriately, the CAREFREE film song. The lush orchestration blends perfectly with Bing's full rounded tones and expressive delivery. A particularly happy choice by Bing for it is a good Irving Berlin ballad that has escaped his attention until now; at least, as far as commercial recording is concerned.

MR. KEYBOARD MAN - THE ENTERTAINER: Being the possessor of a pretty good recording of this item by Ken Colyer and his Jazzmen, I was at first surprised to see it featured on this album. Basically a ragtime jazz number, it has been given some special treatment by Ken Barnes and Pete Moore that sums up the essence of the message that jazz really has got 'rock 'n roll beat by a mile'. An unusual item for a vocal duet but, perhaps not surprisingly, the "boys" come out triumphant yet again.

SPRING, SPRING, SPRING: the yearly 'miracle' is unfulred in the most engaging manner in what virtually amounts to the penultimate track. The inventive Johnny Mercer lyric (written with Gene de Paul for the film SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS) has a fresh-as-dew airing by Bing and Fred as they discourse most melodiously on the mating instincts that attend that season of the year. A very happy track that has you whistling merrily long after the final spin-off.

A COUPLE OF SONG AND DANCE MEN: reunited by a second recording of the original 1946 song that forms the title track to this album, Bing and Fred are again featured in their most famous roles as individual performers. One could almost be conned into believing that they sound just as they did thirty years ago by this joyous repeat. Pete Moore even gives a nod to the late-lamented John Scott Trotter by the arrangement, which version hardly seems so long ago as to be nostalgia - and yet it is. Perish the thought it is 30 years ago....Both artists reconise this aspect and play it up for all it is worth, ending the number with the corny gags and a pressing enquiry by Bing of Fred as to what ever became of the dancing manual that Fred had said he had written those three decades ago? The book is still in the embryonic stage it would seem, but at least Fred was coerced into a few tap steps for this number (he had said he would never dance again - and see Ken Barnes's persistence in the last issue of BING!), and when Bing's voice 'hits the air' and Fred's feet 'hit the ground' and indeed, when their voices blend in duet one could hardly be entertained to better effect.

TOP BILLING: a short reprise of this number takes a personal look back over album-mamaking and their status relationship, and Fred comes in with the comment:

"I had a ball." Really, Fred - and Bing - that remark goes for us all. The entire album is a ball, a banquiet, and a feast of entertainment from start to finish.

Editor: No need to put Bert's final assessment to the vote! And what a lovely experience to be able to do a complete volte-face with my remarks a few pages back about accompaniment! Wham! and I'm back on course; the accompaniment to this album is, in a word, SUPERB! Tasteful, complementing the singers and not trying to overpower them; giving deference to the singers and not, as so often happens, seeming to resent their presence and trying to batter them off the track.

> Pete Moore has done a wonderful job - light and shade, sympathy, understanding, musical, beaty - and beautifully in its place. I refer to the music of the album. Bing and Fred sing effortlessly, revelling in the accompaniment - as well they might, and as they are entitled to. Dare ANYONE refer to this as a "weedy British orchestra"?

And that solo track by Bing: here we come close to what I would like to hear as the pattern of a Crosby album. That beautiful, rippling, unobtrusive but so effective rhythm. And Bing, no doubt about it, singing along in his old majestic fashion. A wonderful track. That might be an idea - Crosby Sings Astaire! Tons of good songs - Bing has already done several and the mind flies to CHEEK TO CHEEK in the Bregman battering. "The Way You Look Tonight", "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off", another rendering of "Fine Romance" to go with "The Way You Look"; "I Won't Dance"; "A Foggy Day","Top Hat","The Continental", "They Can't Take That Away from Me", "Let's Face the Music and Dance" and so many more great songs that were poured into the Astaire (and partner) films. Bit infra dig, no doubt; for lesser artists than Bing. Butm a whimsy inspired solely by this tremendous rendering of CHANGE PARTNERS.

About Fred's dancing surely there cannot be two opinions; but his singing? Quite unique; its always been thin; always deprecating....and yet even today, as aeons ago, when Fred is singing the times I've thought: Gee whiz, he ain't gonna make it...its fading away... and then he produces a plaintive, telling, phrase and you find yourself thinking again: As a singer, Fred Astaire is certainly on his own!

I was in correspondence with a British vocalist only a short while ago - he used to sing with one of our famous broadcasting bands in the 30s and 40s - and he told me a relevant story. At one of the restaurants this band did a "residency" at the proprietor was a fervent Astaire fan - this was in the 'Thirties, remember. And he kept telling the band-leader: "Tell you singer to sing like Fred Astaire!" When the leader, with a smile, told the vocalist he, the latter, said "What! Sing like Fred Astaire? Only Fred can sound like Astaire...I certainly cannot!"

But that is Fred on this current album with Bing: astonishingly effective with what is, after all, a "small" voice. As for the tremendous banter that decorates the numbers, all the experience of those 100 years in the business is readily apparent. The essence of ad libbing is that it sounds that way, and NOT carefully rehearsed. In this case, I doubt whether, in fact, it was rehearsed.

And a big bouqet, again, to Pete Moore - a man after my own heart who knows when the beat is necessary - and when it should give way to the melody. And when he changed the tempo - the sudden switch to "trad" in the middle of HOW LUCKY CAN YOU GET is a good example - it was called for, and appropriate not just an arranging "whim". As you will have fathered, I like this abbum very much indeed. From all angles.

Because so many members wrote complaining they had no access to Windmill Records (mainly at Tesco's though seen elsewhere) your secretary laid in a modest stock of the album with the brilliant sleeve: BING CROSY - FAVOURITE MELODIES (WMD 260). There are half-a-dozen remaining if anyone is still short. Write to Reg Bristo - £1.25 incl. post and packing.

KEEPING TRACK continues on next page.....

A CHRISTMAS GIFT Ronco P12430 (Ronco Teleproducts(UK) Ltd) Stereo:

THE WHITE WORLD OF WINTER - just the one Bing track on this Christmas special that was advertised on TV last December. Other well-known singers featured are Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Andy Williams, Julie Andrews, Sammy Davis, Jnr., and Duke Ellington to name a few of the performers on the twenty Yuletide tracks. Perhaps the most interesting feature from a collector's point of view is the sleeve. It opens out to a "pop-up" Nativity scene, elaborately decorative from front and rear and of considerable dimensions. Bing's 1965 song with chorus and orchestral accompaniment by Sonny Burke is a popular selection for such Christmas "specials" and has been faithfully reproduced here.

BING CROSBY MANY HAPPY RETURNS Vocalion VLP 1 U.K. Decca. £1.99.

1. Where the Blue of the Night E37373-B
2. Out of Nowhere.
3. If You Should Ever Need Me.
4. Were you Sincere?
5. Just One More Chance. LA 1037-A
6. I'm Thru' With Love. LA 1024-A
7. Many Happy Returns of the Day.
8. I Found a Million Dollar Baby.

1. At Your Command. LA 1051-B
2. I Apologise.
3. Dancing in the Dark.
4. Stardust.
5. Sweet and Lovely.
6. Too Late.
7. I'm Sorry Dear E37440-A
8. Goodnight, Sweetheart.

From the good offices of Geoff Milne at Decca comes this very handsome presentation of 16 of some of the best of Bing for 1931. It is virtually a diminished amalgam of the earlier Ace of Hearts albums AH40 and AH88, with the bonus of the alternate take -B for WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT. The error of take -A on the sleeve for that song can be laid at the door of the printers for it was intentional to use the -B master. Matrix numbers and recording dates are noted for every song, but they are only given here (above) where there is a known variant. The transference is faithfully accomplished, and the actual LP is set off by an attractive label - and Bing is again No. 1 in what looks like being a new series.

Geoff Milne has written for the sleeve a potted biography of Bing between the years 1925 and 1931, closing with the note that apart from two brief occasions these songs have remained in the British catalogues since their original release. This nostalgic collection is housed in a sleeve ambient of earlier days with its "Well's Fargo" type gold lettering set in an arabesque frame. Quite handsome; and below it an equally handsome young Bing by way of a technicoloured publicity still set in a blue-background oval frame. This photo appears on other LP sleeves, including AH88 and was originally, I believe I am correct in saying, supplied by Frank Murphy, former Secretary of the ICC. At £1.99 the January release of this new collection (not a reissue for it has no equivalent) made a very welcome start to the year.

THE KING OF JAZZ STORY "BIXOLOGY". COLLECTOR'S EDITION. Italian JOKER 14 Vol. Set.

Vol. 7 LONELY MELODY SM 3563

Side One: Changes -2
Changes -3
Mary -2
Mary -4

Side Two: Ol' Man River.

Vol. 8 MISSISSIPPI MUD SM3564

Side 1. Mississippi Mud
Make Believe.
There Ain't No Sweet Man -2
There Ain't No Sweet Man -3

Side Two: From Monday On -3
Mississippi Mud -2
Mississippi Mud -2
From Monday On -4
From Monday On -6

Vol. 9 SHOW BOAT SM 3565

Side Two: Metropolis (Part 3)
Lovable.

Cont. over....

Vol. 10 LOUISIANA SM3566

Side One: My Pet -1
My Pet -2
My Pet -3

Side Two: It was the Dawn of Love -1
It was the Dawn of Love -2
It Was the Dawn of Love -3

Vol. 11 OL' MAN RIVER. SM3567

Side One: Get Out and Get Under the Moon
'Tain't So, Honey, 'Tain't So.
I'd Rather Cry Over You.

Side Two: That's My Weakness Now.
Georgie Porgie.
Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now.
Out-o'-Town Gal.

Vol113 FUTURISTIC RHYTHM SM3569

Side One; Reaching for Someone.
Oh Miss Hannah.
Waiting at the end of the Road.
When You're Counting the Stars Alone.

As can be seen, six separately obtainable LPs here from a unique collection of BIXOLOGY;and all of them featuring Bing mainly as the lead vocalist. Not quite a definitive set, perhaps, for there have been two released takes of Metropolis (Part 3). The take on Vol. 9 here is not known at the time of writing. These LPs are obtainable from 'The Swing Shop', 1b Mitcham Lane, Streatham, London, S.W.16 at £2.45 each, plus postage. Its a break-the-bank quarter again, but for "compleat collectors" still short of that elusive variant master here's an ideal opportunity. For "newer fellas" not yet totally acquainted of Bing with Bix take out a second mortgage and buy the lot - you won't regret it!

JAZUM 39 BING CROSBY

Side One;			
1. I've Got the Girl.	W142785-3	1. Where the Blue of the Night	E37373-B
2. Shanghai Dream Man.	A37764 -4	2. I'm Sorry, Dear.	E37440-A
3. Pretty Lips.	A38124 -1	3. I Found You.	E37525-B
4. Side by Side.	A38378 -4	4. Starlight.	B11291-A
5. Magnolia.	A38779 -1	5. Soft Lights and Sweet Music.	BX11416-A
6. Mississippi Mud/I Left My Sugar Standing in the Rain.	A39271 -3	6. Love You Funny Thing	B11330-A
7. Sweet Li'l/Ain't She Sweet.	A39272 -3	7. Shadows on the Window.	B11417-B

JAZUM 40 BING CROSBY

Side One:			
1. The Five Step.	A39569-3	1. Paradise.	B11480-B
2. The Calinda.	A39575-2	2. You're Still in my Heart.	B11481-A
3. It Won't be Long Now.	A39577-8	3. Waltzing in a Dream.	JC8593-A
4. Miss Annabelle Lee.	A40894-2	4. Happy-Go-Lucky You.	JC8594-A
5. From Monday On.	A41612-3	5. Lazy Day.	JC8596-B
6. What Price Lyrics.	A43121-3	6. Love me Tonight.	JC8640-1
7. I'm Wingin' Home.	A43140-2	7. Let's Try Again.	JC8597-A

These are available from WILLIAM C. LOVE, 5808 Northumberland St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217,USA at 5.75 dollars in the States, or 6.75 other countries. Price includes postage. Other sources may be known to some collectors. To calculate dollar exchange rate in sterling see most daily newspppers City page. Roughly, it is between 40 and 50p to the dollar. Clearly these two albums are of considerable significance by virtue of the fact that there are titles and takes that have rarely, if ever, found their way on to commercially available LPs before. The inclusion of Bing's first-ever recording, I'VE GOT THE GIRL, is of particular note in

this, his fiftieth anniversary year of recording. Whilist not an 'earth shaker' it is a catchy song and Bing, and his buddy Al Rinker are heard to better effect here with Don Clark and his Hotel Biltmore Orchestra of 18.10.26 than on some Whiteman tracks. I FOUND YOU is hard enough to find in the take -A version: till now the -B take has been regarded as a "test" recording and officially unreleased. With 1932 being rather a forgotten year other than for Bing hits, it is particularly pleasing that songs like LOVE YOU FUNNY THING and onward have been featured. There may be those who baulk at STARLIGHT - but you can't please everyone. Deservedly, these two LPs are going to be well sought after - let's hope enough have been pressed.

(Editor: 1932 a forgotten year Bert? That's the year I left school - perhaps you're right! Oh, and its the year I started working for my living....but, more important, who can possibly baulk at STARLIGHT? Tremendous Bing number - I can recall Geo Smith and I playing this a dozen times at least in a row at Keighley a few years back. And it hasn't appeared on LP before, has it?)

REMEMBER THEM? MCA COPS 7403 Australian.

Side One; Just A Couple of Song and Dance Men (with Fred Astaire)

One Bing track only - and that mis-titled as the word "Just" is superfluous.

A NOSTALGIC HOUR OF BING CROSBY. MCA MAPS 6328 Australian.

Side 1:
1. Singing on a Star.
2. Where the Blue of the Night.
3. Blue Skies.
4. Just One More Chance (1954)
5. Zing a Little Zong.
6. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral.
7. Play a Simple Melody.
8. Galway Bay.
9. Sam's Song.
10. Please (1954)
11. Did Your Mother Come from Ireland? (1954)

Side 2:
1. Blue Hawaii.
2. A Couple of Song and Dance Men.
3. Pit It There, Pal.
4. Mississippi Mud (1954)
5. In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the E'g.
6. Road to Morocco (1944)
7. McNamara's Band.
8. Sweet Leilani.
9. The Wait, the Porter & the Upstairs (Maid.
10. Chicago Style
11. White Christmas.

This LP is a "down under" equivalent of UK and US releases of BEST OF BING type albums. Not a direct equivalent, mind, for there are some interesting variations by the inclusion of Bing's Autobiography tracks cut with Buddy Cole in 1954.

THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS. Columbia P3S 5806 Stereo (US 3-LP set individually numbered)

DS 979 I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day. DS 980 has no Bing content)
DS 981 Happy Holiday.

THE SPECIAL MAGIC OF BING CROSBY MGM ACB 00202

Being a direct equivalent of MGM 2353 101; the "Bregman" album, which was a reissue of a reissue of a reissue of....'nuff said!

GALA PERFORMANCE Polydor 2489-103 Stereo (UK) Cassette 3194-287

Side 1: They All Laughed. Side 2: 'Deed I Do.

Already mentioned in the last issue of BING; two tracks only; and again from the "Bregman" LP. Surely it wasn't that popular? Remainder of album by various artists.

BING 'N' AL. VOL. 3 TOTEM 1013 CANADIAN.

Side 1: CHESTERFIELD SHOW. Broadcast 15 Feb. 1950. (Recorded 2 February 1950)

Songs: The New Ashmolian Marching Society; Happy Times; California Here I Come; Yaka Hula Hicky Dula; Whispering; Bye, Bye, Baby; Waiting for the Robert E. Lee; You're Wonderful. Guest: Al Jolson.

Side 2: CHESTERFIELD SHOW. Broadcast 30 Nov. 1949 (Recorded 24 Nov. 1950)

Songs: I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Cocoanuts; Toot, Toot, Tootsie, Goodbye; Back In Your Own Backyard; Baby Face; That Lucky Old Sun. Guest: Al Jolson.

BING 'N' AL VOL. 4 TOTEM 1015 CANADIAN.

Side 1: PHILCO RADIO TIME. Broadcast 3 Dec. 1947 Guest: Al Jolson.

Songs: Pass that Peace Pipe; Kate, Ma Blushin' Rosie; Sunbonnet Sue; A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody; The Best Things in Life are Free.

Side 2: PHILCO RADIO TIME. Broadcast 7 May, 1947. Guests: Al Jolson, Irving Berlin.

Songs: Country Style; Linda; Oh, How I hate to Get up in the Morning; Lazy; All By Myself; Alexander's Ragtime Band; Easter Parade; White Christmas.

BING 'N' AL. VOL. 5 TOTEM 1016 CANADIAN.

Side 1: CHESTERFIELD SHOW. Broadcast 3 May 1950 (Recorded 10 April 1950)
Guests: Al Jolson, Ella Fitzgerald.

Songs: The Horse Told Me; I Hadn't Anyone Till You; Stay with the Happy People; Give my Regards to Broadway; Ma Blushin' Rosie; Avalon; Lullaby of Broadway; My Old Kentucky Home.

Side 2: PHILCO RADIO TIME. Broadcast 15 Jan. 1947. Guest: Al Jolson.

Songs: A Rainy Night in Rio; Anniversary Song; April Showers; Ma Blushin' Rosie; Swanee; The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else.

TOTEM 1017 and TOTEM 1022; Believed to feature Bing but no further details available at this time.

The TOTEM label is among the best of the off-the-record companies that are pulling radio shows, or parts thereof. In these cases the shows are complete, with commercials, and it is obvious that the shows that Bing did with Jolie are very popular. The LPs will be available through the usual import retailers; though expensive. Reproduction on the many we have heard is of high quality.

DINAH SHORE 1947 & BING CROSBY 1952 Sunbeam HB-309 U.S.

Side A. THE DINAH SHORE SHOW 28 May 1947 (non-Bing)

Side B. THE BING CROSBY SHOW 13 Nov. 1952 Guests: Dinah Shore, Joe Venuti.

Songs: Just You, Just Me (Bing); Open Up your Heart (Bing); You'll Never Get Away (Duet); Early Autumn (Dinah); Sleepy-time Gal (Bing); Doodle,doo,doo (duet); Memphis Blues (Dinah); You Belong to Me (Bing); Laura (violin solo by Joe Venuti.

More radio material, and in Bing's case, most probably a GEC show, though this has to be

confirmed. Currently available from Dave Carey at "The Swing Shop", price £3.75p.

JACK BENNY Famous Personality FPS 1002 US.

Side 2: SKETCH FOUR: Featuring Jack Benny, Bing Crosby, Gary Cooper, Harpo Marx and Ken Carpenter. (The problem is to find out what the speechless Harpo wants, with Gary Cooper acting as interpreter. Bing sings MY BLUE HEAVEN, accompanied by Harpo Marx).

CHRISTMAS WITH BING CROSBY, NAT KING COLE, DEAN MARTIN. Capitol SL6925 Stereo U.S.

Side 1: What Child is This?) Medley.
The Holly & The Ivy)

Pat-a-Pan.)Medley.
While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night)

Side 2: Hark the Herald Angels Sing) Medley.
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear)

I Wish You a Merry Christmas.

The above represents the Bing content only, of course; but the source of the material is not presently known, nor whether the three artists are featured together.

Editor: An incredibly detailed round-up by Bert Bishop. Of minimal interest to some, of consuming interest to others. But it is essential to keep pace with all that appears on record of Bing's singing. And even if one isn't disposed to expend the large amount of money involved to obtain these recordings (apart, of course, from the commercial issues here in Britain) the matter of these recordings makes fascinating reading, it is felt.

A postscript to BING ON THE BOX might mention that the Parkinson/FRED ASTAIRE programme duly appeared in February after its postponement from the Christmas season. There was no "unexpected" appearance by Bing by means of a "filmed tribute". Bing was, of course, mentioned. Parkinson remarked that Bing was celebrating 50 years in the business - how long had Fred been in it? "Oh Bing's new....actually, I've been in it ....(softly) ..63 years...."

At another time Fred remarked: "Oh Bing..... I love Bing..." Fred was his unassuming self; got through his songs (well-arranged medley especially) adequately and was, in the latter part of the programme, joined by his daughter, Ava Astaire. The programme was highly enjoyable. A member, however, who attended both the Crosby show and the Astaire wrote me that the latter was considerably lacking in atmosphere and excitement compared to the Bing show. Nevertheless, it was good viewing and Fred afforded some delightful anecdotes about making his famous films.

Odd that Bing, with Roy Plomley, opted for his name being English "way back" - and not plumping for Irish! Relevant in these days of D-E-V-O-L-U-T-I-O-N- ....though, what does it matter if you go back far enough? Who was who....if you go back far enough!

Regarding the film WHITE CHRISTMAS, did you know that the part played by Danny Kaye was first projected for Fred Astaire? It was later assigned to Donald O'Connor but offered to Danny when Donald fell ill. That it was the biggest money-maker of all Bing's films? That Irving Berlin wrote another song - A CROONER, A COMIC - which wasn't used?

TRADING POST

New readers are asking for the loan of the out-of-print discography in order that they might photo-stat it! This would be an exceptionally tall order as the LPography ran to 80 pages and not the odd leaflet or two! Readers are recommended to be a little patient for it is the firm intention to republish the up-dated version in the not-too-distant future. It may come as a surprise perhaps to learn that reissues of Bing's materials - plus of course, original LP recordings - are so incredibly extensive.

ROY BISSELL, 26 Charlotte Rd. Wednesbury, West Midlands, WS10 7NE: BING. The Early 30's Vols 1 and 2 (Ace of Hearts) in good condition offered for ROBIN & THE SEVEN HOODS (stereo) and Frank Sinatra MY KIND OF BROADWAY, good condition (both these are Reprise records, of course).

EDGAR LAWSON, 19 Belgrave St. Liscard, Wallasey, Merseyside: Wants back issues of BING EXCEPT Nos. 4,6,7,8,16,17,38,39, 40 He also would like the following LPs:

Ace of Hearts: Old Masters Vol. 2 AH17, Old Masters Vol. 3 AH24 and BING SINGS FOR CHILDREN. Also BING ON THE HAPPY SIDE (WARNER), THOROUGHLY MODERN BING; and COLUMBIA CL2830 Paul Whiteman & Orch. featuring Bing; Capitol T2300 THAT TRAVELLIN' TWO-BEAT, Brunswick BING'S HOLLYWOOD NO.1.

Readers who wanted to advertise for THE EARLY 30s Vols. 1 and 2 may feel they can satisfy their wants with the new VOCALION (Decca) reviewed in this issue, entitled MANY HAPPY RETURNS.

Your Editor would like to sneak in a request for any Paraguayan records - or similar, that is, sung in Spanish with guitar or guitar/harp accompaniments. In particular I want LOS PARAGUAYOS (Phillips) BBL7477 FIESTA PARAGUAYA; SBBL 624 (or the mono) CANCIONES DE LAS AMERICAS; BL7610 FELICIDADES! and BL 7644 ACUARELA PARAGUAYA. But, I am interested generally in such records. Plenty of Bing, including Totems, for exchange (these are of course, duplicates!!) and other vintage material for exchange - or cash.

The back nos. offered by RAY TOREY in the last issue raised the handsome sum of £6 for the postal "fund"; unsuccessful applicants are warmly thanked.

Members are reminded that they are welcome to advertise free in this feature for records, pictures, tapes &c. Items for insertion should be written on a separate sheet of paper; this is of considerable assistance in collating them - and will help to secure their inclusion. An odd line in a full letter is sometimes difficult to trace!

FRANK MURPHY, as most will know, is the former Secretary of the ICC (in fact, its founder under this name) and over the years he has built up a vast gallery of Bing pictures and his "BINGPICS" advertisement can be seen in full page (and more) form in this issue. In a PS to that page of pictures Frank now tells me he can offer, as a special INTRODUCTION, a 10-postcard pack comprising scenes from the film STAGECOACH, Bing's Glasgow visit 1972, St. Andrews 1952, "DON'T BE A DO-BADDER" from "Robin" plus a unique shot of Bing with Donald Peers, Bob Hope and Ted Ray for £1; send to Frank at the address given on BINGPICS page.

To those who collect pictures this is a fine opportunity.

Further additions to the list are:

68. Bing/Bob "Hong Kong"
69. " " great pose No.2.
70. Bing/Bob/Joan Collins playing cricket, 1961.
71. Bing in Surrey, 1960.
72. Bing takes taxi, Buckingham Palace, 1960.
73. Bing pays taxi fare, London
74. Bing arrives Dublin airport 1960.

FRANK MURPHY also wishes to apologise to those who ordered cassettes from him as a result of his offer in the last issue. After working diligently for days he was horrified to have cassettes returned to him and realise something had gone wrong, very wrong, with his recording equipment. Frank instantly returned all monies with his sad regrets.

JACK N. SOUTHER, 2011-44th AVE. SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. 94116, USA has hundreds of Bing record disposals, US labels, commercial and otherwise. All sizes and speeds; sheet music and books. Has Bing record wants on US, English and foreign labels. Send lists. Will buy, trade and consider offers. Offers 100 dollars for N- copy of Dorsey Bros. OK 41181. (Jack is a prominent US collector - Editor) Seems excellent opportunity here for mutual benefits.

REV. GEORGE DUFFY, 540 NW 132nd St. Miami, Florida, 33168, USA is keen to get in touch with VERA LYNN collectors - drop him a line....

Several readers write to point out that they cannot find Bing's song I'LL BE YOURS in discographies, A to Z &c. It appears on the BING IN PARIS Ace of Hearts, for instance. The answer is, of course, that the song is listed under its real title of J'ATTENDRAI, though this is followed in brackets with I'LL BE YOURS; the date is 18 Dec. 1945 - a prolific recording year for Bing, by the way.

DICK PEARSON, 45 Park View Rd., London, N.17 has BING'S HOLLYWOOD 5 and 6 spare in Excellent condition. Prefers exchange: what have you?

BERT BISHOP "Tideway", Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 6AJ has the following LPs for trade or sale, mostly in mint or new condition:

THE ROAD TO HONG KONG LOM 16002
CROSBY CLASSICS HM520
"1927" LSA 3077
FINIAN'S RAINBOW F2015
EL SENOR BING MGM-C 868
BING CROSBY'S TREASURY - THE SONGS I LOVE LWS 343/348
BING & THE ANDREWS SISTERS VOL.1 CPS 80
RHYTHM ON THE RANGE CPS 81
CHRISTMAS STAR B/J 202
THE YOUNG BING CROSBY CDS 1084
12 SONGS OF CHRISTMAS R2022
PEPE NPL28015
THE SUMMIT R5031
BING & THE ANDREWS SISTERS VOL 2 CPS 91
I LOVE YOU TRULY CPS 79

Bert wants: 101 GANG SONGS PT 2/AMERICA I HEAR YOU SINGING/HIGH TOR/LE BING/ ALI BABA AND THE 40 THIEVES/BING AND CONNIE/'WAY BACK HOME/TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL - all Bing of course, any label.

Although The A to Z of Bing Crosby and The LPography (listing of all Bing's LP issues) are sold out and await reprinting and updating, a few copies of the Mini-Discography at 50p post paid can be obtained from the Editor. This lists ALL Bing's records and the "mini" merely means records are not listed under all the varying labels which originally presented the record all over the world. And that is meant literally!

It is learned that the "Bing-bust" project mooted in the Christmas issue as being undertaken by MR. AUSTIN BENNETT has been shelved for the time being as the response was rather less than expected.

MR. R.C.BLYTH (BOB) 47 Evelyn Ave. Kingsbury, London, NW9 0JF (phone 01-205-0732 - the 01 of course for members outside London)has FOR SALE about 200 Bing records. Bob did not mention it but I imagine these are 78s. Ring or write for details of precisely what is available.

ALAN CHADWICK, 3 Mortimer Close, Phoenix Green, Hartley Wintney, Nr. Basingstoke, Hants: (I ought to charge for THAT address - longest on the books!) makes what must be a unique offer: Alan says -"I have video recordings of STAGECOACH; ANYTHING GOES (1956 version); HIGH SOCIETY: JUST FOR YOU: ROAD TO RIO, and THE PARKINSON SHOW. In addition I have the sound films ROAD TO MOROCCO; BLUE SKIES; BLUE OF THE NIGHT; SING BING SING (the last two are Mack Sennett with truly great Crosby singing) and my own privately-shot film in colour of Bing golfing at Turnbery last summer, and of Bing, Bob Hope and Kathryn at Sunningdale a few weeks later. This "home-produced" film runs for about 25 minutes. Anyone who is interested in seeing any of these is quite welcome to come to my home. Just a few days notice will do."

Editor: A unique invitation and I will be surprised if Alan doesn't get plenty of com-

BINGPICS

PHOTO SERVICE TO:
THE AMERICAN CLUB CROSBY
AND
THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Order from: FRANK MURPHY
32 FERNDALE AVENUE
WALLSEND, TYNE & WEAR
NE28 7NE
ENGLAND
Tel. Wallsend 629464

ORDER BY PHOTO NUMBER ONLY

1. Bing and Harry aged 2
2. Bing and Mary Martin "Birth of the Blues"
3. Bing and Les Phythian, Cockermouth, 1966
4. Bing and The Little Dublin Singers, 1966
5. Bing, Kathryn and Harry, 1961
6. Bing and Broadway Bill, Riding High
7. Bing at the CBS mike, 1931
8. Bing, Dixie and Gary, 1933
9. Bing and Bob Hope, Variety Girl
10. Bing in Russian Adventure, 1966
11. Bing, Kathryn, Frank Murphy, Cockermouth, 1966
12. Bing and Gary, outdoor Benefit, 1950's
13. Bing solo at mike same Benefit
14. Bing and Kathryn at wine store late 50's
15. Bing and Kathryn with shark fishing trophies
16. Bing wih Sinatra and Deano 'Robin'
17. Doctor Rhythm, 1938
18. Bing, Joan Collins, Hope. British Lion pub, 1961
19. Bing and Louis Campbell, The Starmaker
20. Bing and Kathryn in evening dress, 1957
21. Bing and Martha Raye, Double or Nothing
22. Bing in Say One for Me
23. Bing and Bob Hope 'Teamwork'
24. Bing, four sons on the set 'Ichabod'
25. Bing and Dixie, early 30's
26. Honest Harry Crosby, St. Leger, 1965
27. Bing at the Calgary Parade, late 50's
28. Bing holding Dolly Varden Trout
29. Bing, Kathryn, with Harry and Mary Frances, 1965
30. Bing and Betty Hutton, Here Come The Waves
31. Bing, Kathryn and Harry, Las Cruces, early 60's
32. Bing golfing at St. Andrew's, 1952
33. Bing and Barry Fitzgerald, Welcome Stranger
34. Bing, Dixie and 4 sons, 1952
35. Bing, Rosie Clooney, Louis Armstrong, The Hi Lo's
36. Bing and Mary Frances, early 40's
37. Bing and radio producer Bill Morrow, 40's
38. Bing and Eddie Lang, 1932
39. Bing and son Lindsay, fishing trip, 50's
40. Bing, Bill Bendix and Cedric Hardwicke
41. Bing singing 'Little One'
42. Bing in The Emperor Waltz
43. Bing, Donald O'Connor and Fred McMurray, Sing You Sinners
44. Bing and the 'Clan' 'Robin'
45. Bing and Michael Holliday — Pose One
46. Bing and Michael Holliday — Pose Two
47. Bing and Michael Holliday — Pose Three
48. Bing and Margie Holliday
49. Bing, Dermot O'Brien and Milo O'Shea, 1966
50. Bing and Les Gaylor, Shepperton, 1961
51. Bing, Alma and Frank Murphy, Derek Parkes, John Maughan, Shepperton Studios, 1961 — Bible Presentation
52. Bing and Perry Como — Pose One
53. Bing and Perry Como — Pose Two
54. Bing and Perry Como — Pose Three

SOUVENIRS OF BING'S LONDON 1975 RECORDING TRIUMPHS

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TRADING POST (Cont) company - perhaps some will like to know that "video" recordings are sound and picture tape.. I have printed Alan's kind invitation as he wrote it though I must confess that I hope there are no legal complications from taking such recordings.

NEIL O'BRIEN, 4 Wychbury Street, Spreydon, Christchurch 2, NEW ZEALAND wants to purchase HIGH TOR (LAT.8154) and SAY ONE FOR ME BBL7335. HIGH TOR - and TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL - seem just about the most difficult albums to come by - and Neil, incidentally, is one of our most distant colleagues.

Overseas members frequently ask for the name of shops which will supply them with Bing (and other) records. One of the surest which operates mail-order systems is THE HMV RECORD SHOP, Oxford Street, London, W.1. Dave Carey's establishment, mentioned elsewhere in this issue is also a recommended establishment. It is a matter of some regret to the "management" of ICC that we cannot undertake the onerous task of running such a system ourselves - except occasionally and in special circumstances. Members can deal with the two places mentioned with confidence. For the reverse process, that is, UK members who want Totem, Sunbeam, and other American/Canadian, they could write to LARRY KINER, 7554 132nd Ave. N.E. Kirkland, Washington, DC 98033, U.S.A. But, buying records in this way can be expensive and subjected to delays, naturally. Though, such issues are not cheap when bought here after importation.

BING TAPE FACILITIES: this provides members with the opportunity of acquiring high quality tapes - open-reel orthodox tapes or cassette - of virtually anything ever sung by Bing Crosby during the course of his epic career be it radio, TV, records and films. Strict legal copyright clauses are applicable to the indiscriminate re-recording of certain items but these special facilities are available via the ICC without offence to anyone.

All tapings are fully guaranteed and recorded dual-track (if open reel) with a choice of speed and spool size to suit individual requirements of members. Delivery is usually speedy, certainly within 21 days. Naturally it is hardly realistic to request a taping of just one track - a matter of around three minutes! A suitably-sized tape of requirements is fairly easily compiled.

Further information on material available can be obtained by sending to the following address, enclosing SAE:

BOB ROBERTS,
56 THOROLD RD.
CHATHAM, KENT.

Bob is our member we are proud to have in THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS as perhaps the most prolific Crosby collector in the world. Charges, incidentally, are extremely reasonable, especially when compared with commercially pre-recorded tapes &c.

This tremendous facilities does not, of course, preclude members from making their own friendly contacts within the Circle when tape-exchanging to mutual benefit can be arranged and your Editor is happy to know that a fair amount of this goes on and happy contacts are indeed made via our good offices.

If, IF, you would like to know more about THE SINATRA MUSIC SOCIETY write to MRS. BERYL OVERBURY, 60 Highland Way, Redditch, Worcs. B98 7RH; lovely lady, enjoys my jokes - I think! Beryl's daughter recently got married and I think that might have taken her mind off Frankie boy for a bit. In any case, she loves Bing, too.

THE BIRTHDAY GAME

by
JOHN BIGNELL.

Most readers have found they can literally spend hours browsing through a Crosby discography; apart from the memories it evokes all kinds of whimsical facets can emerge.....here is one, with a big surprise for the Editor!

Perhaps you've already played the "birthday game"? I'm sure if you haven't you could find it amusing and rewarding. How do you play? Well, all you require is a copy of the Mini-Discography really, though pencil and paper might handy. One of the multi-joys of being a Bing enthusiast is that, thanks to the wonderful bounty of thousands of recordings he has made since 1926, one discovers he has recorded songs on practically every day of the year - unless you happen to be a Noel or a Carol and were born on Christmas Day or even Boxing Day. But this would be most careless of you for there are not many other days of the year on which Bing has not made at least one commercial recording. And the non-commercial discography which we all eagerly await will almost certainly plug several other gaps. Indeed, I shall be very surprised if it is not eventually demonstrated that with the exceptions already mentioned Bing has, in fact, produced something melodious for us on every single days of the year.

Working thro' the discography I have listed my own particular "birthday songs" - February 9 being the relevant date - and I came up with a fascinating list. So pleased, in fact, was I with the results of my research that I enlisted the aid of the prolific Bert Bishop by dragging him away from his bench for a couple of hours and had a tape compiled of the songs in recording date order. Here is the complete sequence of titles:

1933: What Do I Care, Its Home.
You've Got me Crying Again.

1940: Marcheta.
Tumbling Tumbleweeds.
If I Knew Then.
The Girl with the Pigtails in her Hair.

1951: Here Ends the Rainbow.
With this Ring I Thee Wed.
We All have a Song in our Hearts.

1953: There's Music in You.
Ohio.
A Quiet Girl.

1968: Thoroughly Modern Millie.
Talk to the Animals.
Ding Dong, The Witch is Dead.
High Hopes.
My Friend, the Doctor.

A lovely, fine-ranging selection of seventeen titles recorded over a period of 35 years. Let's look at them a little more closely; the first two were made before I knew Bing existed. I was five years old at the time and limited to nursery rhymes, no doubt. But these two were among a list of thirty one songs Bing recorded reasonably early in his career with no specified orchestral accompaniment - though no doubt either Victor Young or Lennie Hayton were not far away. YOU'VE GOT ME CRYING AGAIN was one of the first 78s I ever bought, back in 1947 and with me now for 30 years almost without my realising its particular significance. WHAT DO I CARE, ITS HOME was the only one of the thirty one songs "with orchestral accompaniment" that I did not know until recently - and what a "smasher" it is. And I'm sure the sentiments expressed by this song caused Mrs. Crosby Senior some amusement. This is assuredly one of my Crosby favourites.

Moving on to the 1940 session - and Bing "honoured" me with his selection for this day with the hauntingly lovely MARCHETA, so happily included in the WORLD RECORDS set,

THE VERY BEST OF BING. Then there was another Crosby classic, surely, with TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS? And the song with the ungrammatical title IF I KNEW THEN, long a favourite of mine and a perfect example of a song which exactly suited the 1940 Bing-range and voice. Finally GIRL WITH THE PIGTAILS - a great up-tempo contrast to the other three. And proof once again that it wasn't possible to keep the lively, swinging Bing quiet for long.

So to 1951 February 9, this time with Lyn Murray and his orchestra and Betty Mullin. Three numbers recorded and I much prefer HERE ENDS THE RAINBOW. Betty duets pleasingly with Bing on this one which has, perhaps, a Hawaiian lilt to it. WE ALL HAVE A SONG IN OUR HEARTS is, for me, a mediocre number, though Bing sings faultlessly without much to work on. WITH THIS RING is a song I positively dislike! Bing and Betty labour unrewardingly thro' a turgid song which I, alas, prefer to forget. Among other things, it reminds of a Spoonerism I perpetrated on my wedding day - you know, unconsciously reversing the initial letters of key-words like "bashier in the cank!". Probably thro' nervousness despite a reassuring toddy when I had to repeat the immortal phrase I managed to stammer: "With this wing I three red!" Caused a splutter of mirth from my best man and didn't do much for me; luckily the vicar, no doubt used to such gaffes, continued quite unperturbed.

Bing was in mainly pensive, gentle mood in 1953 - not surprisingly if you think back - and recorded three numbers - a fourth, THE MAGIC WINDOW was also recorded but rejected to be recorded a month later. All beautifully executed, of course, and I think I like OHIO best of the three, with A QUIET GIRL running it a close second. I feel THERE'S MUSIC IN YOU should have been sung to Bing, not so much by him!

Fifteen years passed - to 1968 - before Bing again recorded on February 9 - and this time in complete contrast to all that had gone before. Five titles from THOROUGHLY MODERN BING - the rest recorded on 12th. All five are given the unique Crosby treatment - I particularly like WITCH IS DEAD with the "we flipped the switch on the witch", a typical Crosby aside. TALK TO THE ANIMALS is tailor-made for Bing's dextrous way with a tricky lyric. Its a matter for regret that Bing had not, by then, met Pete Moore and Ken Barnes! The Bugs Bower Orchestra I rate as very ordinary - I'm sure this album could have been greatly enhanced if Bing had received more sympathetic and - dare I say it - more professional backing with his accompaniment.

Well, that's my birthday list; I hope you have as much luck. Whoever celebrates a birthday on August 14 will hit the jackpot with the immortal 1935 session with the Dorsey Brothers. With Pete Moore in the States and a new album on the stocks I feel some interesting additions to my February 9 list may be in the offing!

Editor: A novel approach - but John Bignell's whimsical way of improving his discographical range brought me an astonishing surprise! To wit, in those 50 years of recording Bing managed to record on MY birthday - on just one occasion! So, I'm with - or rather little better - than the Noels and Carols! In fact, I have made only a cursory glance through, but I fancy anyone banking on August (sorry!) and September is gonna be on short rations. The one year on which Bing "worked" the 23rd August was, as far as I can see, 1943 when he made OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING and PEOPLE WI SAY WE'RE IN LOVE!

1943 wasn't much of a year so I was lucky I suppose. It reveals another discographical oddity for there was no recording for Bing between July 1942 and July 1943 owing to the musicians' strike in America.

Perhaps the most significant birthday in this little exercise would be May 29th, for it was on this day in 1942 - Springtime of course - that Bing made the first recording of the then unseasonal - WHITE CHRISTMAS!

Still, who expected Bing to record in August? By the way, I wasn't, as you might think, 101 in 1943!

LINES FROM LESLIE GAYLOR OF COURSE!

Probably no-one has felt quite so fulfilled - cleated perhaps - as "our man in the Isle of Wight". He has worked indefatigably for years to keep the name of Bing Crosby prominent; he has, too, been resonsible for many people joining the ICC who would otherwise not have known of its existence because his name, too, has attracted so much publicity in the National Press. Here is Les's looked-for contribution for this quarter:

Well, friends, here we are well into 1976 and I am sure the predominant thought with most of us is: Can we possibly experience another year like 1975 turned out to be with its exciting catalogue of events? I don't have to gaze into a crystall ball with a turban hat to suggest that 1976 might well emulate its predecessor. On December 9 last I received a letter from our enterprising friend, Ken Barnes, telling me among other things that he was again flying to America with Pete Moore to record four songs with Bing during the second week of January or thereabouts. Subsequently I received the following letter from BING CROSBY ENTERPRISES:

Dear Leslie:

Nice to hear from you. We have a couple friends of yours here now going to record four tunes with Bing next Monday. They are Ken Barnes and Pete Moore. They are using a large orchestra - forty-two pieces.

Yes, Leslie, Bing recorded a Spanish album with Paul Smith about four months ago. When it will be published is not known at this time. Will let you know when I find out.

Enclosed is a Zerox copy from the HOLLYWOOD REPORTER describing the next TV Special that Bing will do.

Hope all is well with you.

Best Wishes,
LEO LYNN.

January 15, 1976

All went well for it may be common knowledge now with the record in the shops, but as I write I've just heard the new single which is of two songs from the show GREAT EXPECTATIONS, the titles being AT MY TIME OF LIFE and CHILDREN, and I was happy to receive a promotional copy of the record from Mr. Alan Warner on February 19. With my usual excitement at a new Bing recording, it happened that I played the "B" side first and a lovely feeling of satisfaction came over me. There was I listening to a lovely song, a superb arrangemnnt again from Pete, a beautiful vocal by Bing, and for me, the finest recording quality ever for the Old Master's voice. It was a thrilling moment.

When, however, I played the "A" side, AT MY TIME OF LIFE, there came a remarkable change and I am certain the colour drained from my face! I gathered my thoughts together and realised that undoubtedly this track was aimed at the "market" and that the accompaniment, for better or worse, would be required to play its part. Hence, a lesser Bing vocal.

In a well-natured manner Ken explained that the "A" side was "commercial Crosby" and the "B" "living-room Crosby"! Ken hoped it would prove a good deal for everyone. In his first mixing, Ken said, he had the rhythm down to a minimum - which meant a fuller-voiced Bing NOT having to fight the accompaniment. Ken felt, however, that whatever he or we might think of it, it lacked the necessary impact so he re-mixed it. Thus

the explanation of the two entirely different sounds on this new single: accenting the bass and rhythm is an essential these days in the production of a "chart" contender! It is not that Bing is too far back, or that the orchestra was unfeeling, simple a calculated "mix" for the reason stated. After this re-mix, incidentally, juke-box operators gave an immediate order for 5,000 copies....so, please don't feel that Bing has been "sabotaged". Actually, I think you will love this record. Bing is in cracking form, the band is good and so is the production.

The other two songs of the four were THE ONLY WAY TO GO from the musical film, THE ENTERTAINER, starring Jack Lemmon, and sung by him. Tim Rice, lyricist of JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR and Marvin Hamlisch, composer of THE WAY WE WERE, joined forces to compose this song. Finally there was the great Frank Loesser song SPRING WILL BE A LITTLE LATE THIS YEAR. Bing, it seems, was most helpful in advising of a musical contractor and studio availability, and 42 musicians were in fact used.

Subsequently I heard from Ken again at greater length: the session took place at United Western Studios, Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles - and I quote Ken Barnes:

"The first song to be recorded was THE ONLY WAY TO GO, a nice easy-paced swinger. Then came CHILDREN, a beautifully etched performance from Bing. This is one of the most touching things I have heard ever - dramatic, tender, and with the Crosby voice in unbelievably fine fettle. Pete's arrangement is one of his very best. I think this track will stand out as a real highspot in Bing's recording career.

Next we did the song that will be Bing's next single for UNITED ARTISTS - AT MY TIME OF LIFE. Once again Pete has furnished another magnificent arrangement which I think is even greater than on THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT; its probably a much better song, too. Again, Bing was in super voice. The single will be released on March 5....

The last song on the session was the Loesser "oldie" SPRING WILL BE A LITTLE LATE THIS YEAR. This is done in a tremendously exciting big-band swing arrangement. I know that you have an aversion to brassy, big band, sounds so I imagine you will not be too interested in this track. Bing sings the first chorus quite softly, building up gradually as the band gets stronger. The second chorus is Pete Moore at his most imaginative and, I would say, even more effective than Nelson Riddle behind Sinatra, and much more modern. A big build-up from the brass leads into a really dynamic solo from Paul Smith on electric piano. Bing re-enters with great authority, his voice strong and rich, soaring elegantly above the orchestra for a real slam-bang finish. This track and CHILDREN are my own favourites from a session full of good things.

KEN THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE RUMOURS THAT BING IS GOING TO DO A PALLADIUM STINT ARE BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE A SOLID REALITY! BRITISH IMPRESSARIO ROBERT PATTERSON CAME ALONG TO SEE BING AT THE END OF THE RECORDING SESSION. BASIL GRILLO TOLD ME THAT ITS ABOUT 90 PER CENT CERTAIN THAT A SERIES OF CONCERTS WILL TAKE PLACE. AND LAST WEEK PETE MOORE RECEIVED A CALL FROM MR. PATTERSON ASKING IF HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HANDLING BING'S MUSICAL DIRECTION FOR THESE DATES. NO PRIZES OFFERED FOR GUESSING PETE'S REPLY!

BUT, at the time of writing, it is not 100 per cent certain - though it does seem more certain that the new ROAD picture which is still only in the "talking" stage

KEN BARNES ALSO SAYS THAT THE LONG-AWAITED BBC BING FILM SEASON LOOKS AS THOUGH IT MAY NOW TAKE PLACE IN MAY, WHICH WILL ALSO BE THE RELEASE DATE OF BING'S 14-TRACK SOLO ALBUM OF BROADWAY SHOW TUNES ON "UNITED ARTISTS" - MADE OF COURSE IN LONDON LAST YEAR AT THE SAME TIME AS TWLIAA. The single of LIFE has been ejoying a certain amount of success in America and reached No.37 in BILLBOARD'S EASY LISTENING CHARTS. The President of U.A. (American) did not express sufficient interest in it to run a campaign for the reason that he is more interested in heavy black

"rock" noises. However, the American sales office had so many requests for the album, and the Astaire material, that the company has been compelled to release the albums in the US. Thus all three, THAT'S WHAT LIFE, SONG-AND-DANCE MEN and Fred's ATTITUDE DANCING will be released in April over there.

Ken Barnes, actually, was not at all surprised at this for whilst in Los Angeles during January he went into several record stores and noticed that they were stocking the albums - inported from Britain!

Another item from Ken that will gratify members is that Bing is coming over to London in the late Spring to do another album for him. The theme of this project will be the "four seasons" and Bing is understood to be pleased about this concept.

There is concrete news of Bing's Latin-American "Mexican/Spanish" album - which will be marketed over here again by Decca. The titles are;

Maria Bonita.
Green Eyes.
Amapola.
Spanish Eyes.
Cuando Caliente del Sol.
Eres Tu.
La Borrechina.
Frenesi.
Besame Mucho.
The Breeze & I. (Andalucia)

Paul Smith is again the musical director and is reported to have come up with some fine arrangements and Ken says it is a great follow-up to A SOUTHERN MEMOIR. Bing's present title for the album is BINGO VIEJO which means OLD PAL BING! This seems a specialised title and it could well have a more recognisable one when it is release - possibly A MEXICAN MEMOIR.

At this point I would like to thank the many people who have sent me so many letter expressing their gratitude at all that was done by various people to make the year of 1975 such a wonderful Crosby year here in Britain. Naturally, I was very proud to receive thsse complimentary letters and thank the writers most sincerely. It is very gratifying for me, and the part I played in their origin, that the two albums recorded over here have, in the main, met with the approbation of all members. There were, of course, those other fine people bracketed with these plaudits - Ken Barnes, Pete Moore and Alan Warner. That these London recordings have been responsible for such a resurgence of interest in Bing is beyond doubt.

What are my favourite titles from both albums? I would say I LOVE TO DANCE LIKE THEY USED TO DANCE, SEND IN THE CLOWNS, BON VIVANT, SPRING SPRING SPRING, I'VE A SHOOTING BOX, and PICK YOURSELF UP.

Seems A SOUTHERN MEMOIR has most members in raptures too. I'm glad Bing Crosby Enterprises launched this for - and this is only my guess - I think the major American recording companies were not particularly interested. It must be said, however, as I study the various letters that no-one can quite get to grips with the backing to GEORGIA ON MY MIND! Last year Bing told Ken that he would get this backing changed as he wasn't very happy with it; but - it stayed as it was. Agreeable chap, Bing! Also I feel the engineering on this track isn't what it might have been. The recording level of Bing's voice is too low and the orchestra too prominent. In fact, several readers wished that either Ken or the Decca engineers had mixed the tracks; they felt there would have been a better sound. This doesn't apply to all the tracks, of course - which is a criticism I suppose because the mixing was very varied. It remains a popular album with most, it would seem, and that certainly goes for me. I was sorry that the BBC didn't feature it as the album of the week on Radio 2.

I like to think that I am the first with the "gen" on Bing's recording activities, but I must confess it was Bert Bishop who, on his Christmas card, gave me the snippet that Bing had done the Spanish alnum! As you can see, I quickly checked with the Crosby office.

Bert was well-informed, of course, and should there be further news of when the Spanish album will be available I will endeavour to include it later on in this issue.

I've had many enquiries, too, about the second "London" album of Show tunes which members appear to be very anxious to get on their turntables. I have heard this record, of course, and indeed I was fortunate enough to witness some of the tracks being made. This is a 14-track album and I am certain members are going to appreciate it very much. It is to be hoped so for it will be up to all of us to "plug" the record as members have done so nobly with the previous album of the pair - THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.

The ballad tracks on the forthcoming album, e.g. MY HEART STOOD STILL, GIVE ME SOMETHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY, YOURS SINCERELY, WITH A SONG IN MY HEART, and HOW ARE THINGS IN GLOCCA MORRO, are quite outstanding in my view. Each has a nice verse by Bing, and also they are the tracks that have the better "voice" balance, by which I mean that while there is a fine, and large, orchestral backing it in no sense overpowers Bing's voice. Criticism has never been short that of recent years Bing has virtually been "sabotaged" when the mixing has him fighting against the accompaniment. But that is not the case with this new album, especially in the tracks I have mentioned.

In fact, I'd go as far as to say that Pete Moore's orchestral ending of GLOCCO MORRO is as good as anything that Bing has experienced. There really is a magnificent blending of the lyric line: "How are things in Glocco Morro, this fine day" with the last three words sung by Bing completely unaccompanied. Then the large orchestral sound comes in, though beautifully modulated. I found this very satisfying and the whole track beautiful stuff.

> As was to be expected, the sad news of the passing of JOHN SCOTT TROTTER was received with sincere regret. Mr. Trotter's partnership with Bing was the most successful in musical history. Their joint work on so many hundreds of records and on radio shows ran into massive entertainment-time for millions of people. Happily, much of it has been recorded for posterity.

Many members will readily recall - especially now that so many "independent" albums are being made available of radio shows - how at the end of these shows the highlight was Bing's singing of a ballad of the day: "And now John Scott...if you're ready..." And the technique often used of Bing talking over the opening music of the Trotter orchestra to introduce the song was simply superb.

Now perhaps I might come to what may be called "Query Corner"! Numerous people have asked me if I thought Bing was recorded in the right key, or the most appropriate key, on the THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT album. Reference is made, for instance, to the possibility that Bing would have sounded less strained on BREEZIN' ALONG WITH THE BREEZE and THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE had he been set half a tone lower? Well, I must confess immediately that I have little idea as far as "keys" are concerned but I gather that the point of view is aimed at that the more familiar deeper-sounding Bing might have resulted - such as on CHANGE PARTNERS, which many I note consider to be Ken Barnes's best Bing recording. I can't be of much help since Ken and Pete Moore flew to the States to make arrangements and one of the things specifically discussed was the pitching of keys and they reached a mutual agreement with Bing on the subject.

> (Editor: The highest and the lowest notes a singer will have to negotiate are relevant when deciding the key he/she will best sing in, though it is a fact that a composer invariably sets the key; this then has to be transposed to suit individual vocalists. A full note, or even a half-note, can make a big difference to the effort required from the singer. A note or a half note up means that the singer will have to sing the highest note in the song that much higher, but will meet the low notes more easily. So, if the singer is not too happy about high notes, he will go down a note or half a note in the "key" which will then mean that he can comfortably sing the low extreme and find the highest just a little easier, eg less of a strain. Again, however, few singers sing in the same key all the time.)

I feel that such things must be left to the musical experts, and certainly we can safely rely on Bing to know the keys which are best for him. It will be recalled, however, that in a much-reported interview he said it was his policy to go down half-a-note, and that many other singers seem to reject this and still tried to do what they could more easily do when they were younger. On the other hand, Bing was also reported as saying that he could get the low notes all right but the money was "up there in the high notes". Still, let's continue to enjoy what Bing still clearly has to offer aided by the energy and ideas of Pete Moore and Ken Barnes.

I would like to take this opportunity, too, to thank all the people who were kind enough to send me so many Christmas cards, letters and notes to express their gratitude at all that had happened in the Bing world in 1975. They were all greatly appreciated. Many asked me to pass on to Ken Barnes' their appreciation for his efforts and this I was most happy to do.

Well, now the ball has already been set in motion for 1976 by the same team and the signs are that we have every reason to expect another wonderful year as far as Bing and his activities are concerned. Let's all enjoy it together!

Editor: And very nice too, Leslie. So we have the Spanish album, the Broadway show tunes album and the new single.....and that's only the start! I was tremendously intrigued to hear of Bing's Latin-American album for, as it may have been noticed! I have a great affection for such music. But - my spirits were somewhat dampened when I learned who the MD was.....if there's one kind of music that needs the indigenous touch it is the rhythms and melodies of South America. I WOULD be jumping up and down in barely restrained excitement and anticipation if I had learned the accompaniment was to be by a quartet of accoustic-guitars! The mind tends to boggle at what Paul Smith will do let loose on an album of this kind; I mean, the SOUTHERN MEMOIR abounded in pefcussive LA rhythms on the slightest pretext when, in truth, there was NONE!

Leslie Gaylor forebore to mention that that lovely song CLOCCA MORRO was included in the show-tunes album at his own special request! And Leslie certainly whets the appetite. In addition to Leslie, your Editor Reg Bristo, Bert Bishop, John Bassett and others have asked me thank so many members who sent Christmas greetings. Speaking for myself, I was amazed - and amused - at the ingenuity some members showed in their choice of card - broken-down typewriters, wind-up gramophones, angels playing all sorts of instruments - as well as Holly and Robins! Thank you very much!

AN AUSTRALIAN REVIEW OF "THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT" - kindly forwarded by Bob Machliss from "down under": it is taken from "THE AGE" TV-RADIO GUIDE, of February 13-19 last so, not all that far back!

"MODEL T" BING HAS PLENTY OF ZING.

Harry Lillis Crosby - born Tacoma, Washingtin, in 1904 - better known as Bing Crosby, may look like he beat Henry Ford's Model T into the world by four years (see picture) but the Old Groaner doesn't sound it.

The septuagenarian's latest album THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT (United Artists, L35568) recorded mainly in London last year, was approached with more than a little apprehension by this Bing fan. Frank Sinatra at times sounds in need of Medicare. But Bing, his voice warm, for the best part strong, and still easy to listen to, gives a relaxed, assured performance.

He is nostalgically spot on. As Alistair Cooke notes "....he has the great good sense to know the right keys, the navigable modulations, where to go and where not to go..."

The songs are a mixture of the old, BREEZIN' ALONG WITH THE BREEZE, THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE, and some of later vintage like Hoyt Axton's HAVE A NICE DAY and Stephen

Schwartz's NO TIME AT ALL.

In the collection of songs, pertaining to and delivered with good humor, most amusing is Johnny Mercer's BON VIVANT. While Bing's version of the Axton tune, HAVE A NICE DAY, could take the durable crooner for a loiter again in the charts. The orchestra is Pete Moore's.

PS: THE SHORTER OXFORD DICTIONARY defines "bing" as...."a heap or a pile". True, perhaps of the Model T, but not crooner Crosby, aged 72, to judge from this album.

- FORESTER.

Editor: Thus an Australian review...and for a bonus, it gives the Australian Cat. No. for those who dote on such things! You may be interested to know that, apart from Australia, I've had letters from New Zealand and South Africa and all over Europe re. THAT'S WHAT LIFE &C.

Several readers used their own personal photographs of Bing - 1975 summer style - for the motif of their Christmas greetings. A nice idea; one of the most original however, came from good friend DICK PEARSON of North London who used a neat little "shrinkage" of the WHITE CHRISTMAS Album for his greeting.

It is quite common to read a book, be it novel, social history, or entertainment history, and find the name of Mr. Crosby cropping up. One could quote scores of examples. This is quite understandable of course for Bing has become part of the social fabric of living in the past 40-50 years. One of the most original references, however, has just appeared in a book by that redoubtable feminist writer, EDNA O'BRIEN, called "FIRST LOVE". A review appeared in the SUNDAY TIMES of Dec. 28 last and it seems the book begins as follows (with acknowledgements to the publishers and THE SUNDAY TIMES):

> "My first foray into culture consisted in meeting a radio actor who tried to inculcate into me the mystery of nuance. He would say a sentence and I would be asked to guess the emotion he was trying to convey - whether it was grief, mockery, or shock. 'My husband whom I loved very much has just left me' was the never to be forgotten sentence and by the intonation I was supposed to guess correctly whether it was as a grieved wife he spoke or an adultress or a fading woman. But all the while - we were in a cafeteria upstairs - I knew that in the cinema below they were showing THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S and people were hearing Bing Crosby's voice, and beholding that face that I thought of as resembling a rueful fox. I knew exactly the moment when Bing hesitated and came back to say goodbye to the nursing nun and how my friend had hollered out 'Back for a guzzle, Bing!' and the irate people in the cinema said 'Shhhhh' as her remark interfered with the gravity of the emotions. I longed to go down and sit in the stalls and see it all over again, the pure nurse, the hospital beds, the drifting snowflakes and the voice that somehow caught in one's throat. But I had no money.....'

Editor:Bing looking like "a rueful fox". How original can you get? Anyone else see Bing like that. But, it was an emotional scene wasn't it, with the lovely Ingrid Bergman as the nursing nun.....and the voice that somehow caught in one's throat.

Many readers will have been saddened to read in the press recently of the sad breakdowns that occurred with ROSEMARY CLOONEY, one of Bing's all-time great duettists, especially in association with the late Buddy Cole. Drugs and drink, alas, were involved and in some way her troubles seemed to be associated with the assassination of Robert Kennedy. I once referred to "the bitter-sweet" voice of Rosie - and will always think of it that way. It seems she has renounced singing for good, which is very sad.

BING ON THE BOX

Wherein Bert Bishop chronicles for posterity, in his own inimitable style, the appearances of the peerless Bing on television and radio in the past quarter. And covering Christmas as it does - there is plenty to cover, we're delighted to say!

Yes indeed, this section of the magazine maintains for this first edition of 1976 a superabundance of programmes to comment on, mainly on account of the remarkable CROSBY CHRISTMAS which it was our pleasure to enjoy here in the UK especially. But before turning to the Yuletide farelet us away back to 14 December of 1975 when at 7pm Yorkshire TV put out over the entire national ITV network the fourth programme of STARS ON SUNDAY which featured Bing - and the last in the series. It would seem Bing telerecorded all four excerpts for this popular Sunday programme in the summer or autumn of last year in one session. We had long known that Bing, among other things, had sung BELLS OF ST. MARY'S for this programme and when it hadn't turned up in the three shows seen it just had to be on the fourth.

And thus it was; our man, as forecast in the Christmas edition of BING, sang the much-loved song on this fourth appearance. It came as quite a surprise, too, when our erstwhile Editor, John Bassett, his wife and baby son were included in the dedications as read out by Mabel Pickles - congratulations John! The accompaniment for Bing was the organ used for his first song on that programme - the "non-commercial" version of THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT; but this time Bing was seen standing by a window of the same studio "room" and he took the song at a steady pace during the course of which he walked across toward the chair in which we had previously seen him seated. It was here that he concluded the second chorus. It was a good all-round Christmassy type programme - a very pleasant aperitif of what was to come later in December.

NOT EVERY YEAR, ALAS!

Most people one speaks to seems to imagine that the film, WHITE CHRISTMAS, is shewn every year; it takes some doing to convince them that this is not so. As far as most of us are concerned it would be a very happy permanent feature of Christmas films on TV. However, it would seem that every two years is the BBC policy of recent years - '71, '73, and '75 with last year's screening falling on Sunday, 21 December at 4.10pm on BBC-2. Being so well acquainted with the film it becomes interesting to watch and pay more attention to some of the lesser characters and features. That the producer relies on an audience to keep its eyes on the central characters all the time becomes apparent when one studies the scenery "locales", which are very artificial in this type of film. No matter; sugar-coated Hollywood it may be but it knocks spots off the locality-made realism of most of today's cinematic offerings. The film has some memorable moments, not the least of which is Bing and Danny Kaye's miming to a recording of Rosemary Clooney and Vera Ellen's song, SISTERS.

But the feature of this film - apart from Bing naturally - that never fails to stun me is the sheer, truly incredible, style of the dance-routines featuring Vera Ellen. The precision, the timing, the intricacies, the sheer brilliance of their professionalism, makes the average "TV spectacular" look like a village-hall concert. And I haven't even mentioned the splendid colourful costumes.....that manipulation of the table-cloth aboard the train as an introduction to SNOW, SNOW, SNOW! lingers in the memory, too. And if the extreme sentimentality apertaining to the "old man" General gets a bit much - well, it was Hollywood! And yet cynical as some of us "old-timers" may get, the fact remains that this particular film has been the means of making youngsters Crosby fans for life! Mail illustrates this. And now, to Christmas Eve....and

A DELIGHTFUL HOUR ON ITV.

Yes, Christmas Eve, 8pm - and the 'phone rings; a familiar figure answers it and says: "Fred Astaire residence. Who's calling please?" At the other end of the line an equally familiar figure answers: "This is the Bing Crosby residence. Mr. Crosby would like to speak to Mr. Astaire....."

Thus was the beginning of a truly delightful hour on ITV entitled MERRY CHRISTMAS, FRED, FROM THE CROSBYS, starring Bing and his wife Kathryn, and their three children, Harry, Mary Frances and Nathaniel. With them were their special guests The Young Americans, to say nothing of their very special guest, the legendary Fred Astaire. It might also be noted that a certain Leslie Townes Hope made a brief and unexpected (?) appearance during the jollifications. It is also certainly worth recording that this programme marked the fortieth anniversary of consecutive Christmas shows that Bing has provided for radio and TV!

> Using the split-image screen device, both main performers were seen talking to each other over the phone, ostensibly as each household's butler. The dialogue led cleverly into a variation of their song TOP BILLING, written by Ken Barnes and Pete Moore. Finally deciding on the album title TWO OLD DUMMIES SING, Bing invited Fred over to his house the next morning to start selecting songs for it.

Following upon the "credits", Bing and his family worked up their own introduction to the programme by going into a little song called THE WEEK BEFORE THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS. During this Bing sang a counter-melody lyric, the substance of which was their preparation for the annual family photograph which forms their Christmas card and goes out to family and friends throughout the world - quite a number being received here in Britain.

As the flash-bulb popped for the picture, Fred arrived - for him, very casually dressed. It took him aback to see Bing and family very handsomely attired as they were for the 'photo scene: "Even the dog looks elegant!" said Fred. When the purpose of Fred's get-together with Bing was known the rest of the family made their excuses to leave - including the dog.

Fred was then introduced to pianist Joe Bushkin who was to accompany them in their search for suitable songs and some kidding around ensued. Fred thought TOP HAT, WHITE TIE AND TAILS would be a good choice, singing a line or two, and Bing countered with SWINGING ON A STAR. Joe came in with OH! LOOK AT ME NOW, a number which he just happened to have written. All these titles were derisively dismissed and they eventually settled for the song of another Joe - Joe Raposo's SING. They took this very lightly; certainly less so than on their actual London-recorded album. After this pleasant interlude Kathryn came in to advise them that the youngsters would be along any minute to rehearse a school concert but the "two old dummies" refused to budge from the music-room and soon the Young Americans were performing a speciality routine in the living room.

> Bing and Fred elected to stick with the golden oldies and Fred remonstrated with Bing for not calling on him to partner him in THE ROAD films instead of playing second fiddle to Bob Hope. And just to prove it could have been done they ran through a few of the celebrated ROAD numbers, with Kathryn as the "love interest". Between them they made jolly and nostalgic listening with TEAM WORK, ROAD TO MOROCCO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW THE LANGUAGE - a short solo from Kathryn - and APALACHICOLA, FLA. At this juncture the door opened:
>
> "Pardon me, " said the arrival, "but I'm looking for Ginger Rogers!"

Surprise, surprise. It was no less than Bob Hope, of course. "The minute my back is turned, " he reproached Bing, "you go looking for my replacement....." Turning to Fred Astaire: "I bet this geriatic John Denver talked you into this!" After some quite brief clowning Bob left, and Bing and Fred re-created their film version of A COUPLE OF SONG AND DANCE MEN with a few new and less energetic tricks though the clip from the film was cleverly interpolated into their number.

DANCING ADVICE - FROM FRED...WHO ELSE?

Bing left the room and Mary Frances came to Fred for some advice; not, as he thought, on some 'affaire d'amour' but on problems with her dancing. No better person to go to with a dancing problem, of course, and Fred was soon duetting PICK YOURSELF UP with Bing's only daughter. The "dancing lesson" turned into a choreographed sequence featuring a medley of Fred's big song hits while Mary Frances demonstrated her considerable talents as a dancer.

Soon the household was asleep, it seemed, after an eventful and entertaining evening. Fred and Bing were dozing on chair and settee when in came young Harry - it was 3 am. He, too, had a problem and his was one of the heart - both "wonderful and terrible" as he avowed. But dad and Uncle Fred were able to reassure him and soon they were singing a contemporary song, YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND whilst Harry showed his talents on the guitar.

The day dawned and Kathryn came to wake the menfolk: "Doesn't that man ever even get crumpled?" she asked of the recumbent Astaire. "Never!" said Bing. They all repaired to the living-room to watch the youngsters rehearse. Nathaniel introduced them: "I'd like you all to meet my Dad; he's the crumpled one. The other gentleman here is Mr. Astaire." Nathaniel explained to his family that this was a rehearsal for a Christmas show and that there were parts for everyone if they cared to join in. Bing accepted for all of them and soon all were singing a medley comprising AND THE BELLS RANG, JINGLE BELLS, SLEIGH RIDE, TOYLAND, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS and a holy carol that led into Bing telling the story of Christ's life and crucifixion and the impact that his birth, life and death have had on mankind. Bing's narration in his resonant tones was reverently moving and sincere - as always - and the gathering, who rounded it off with the carol IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER, seemed quite moved - and not only for the cameras. Fred remarked: "That was really beautiful; too bad we can't use that for the album."

Bing commented on how well the youngsters had blended the whole modd of the season in the one medley and Harry and Nathaniel said they had had to go through a great many songs to achieve that end. There was some heart-searching by having to discard "the one about palm trees in Beverly Hills", Mary Frances noted and Fred jumped in quickly to agree: "That's a great Christmas song," he observed. But Bing thought he'd ever heard that one so with a little prompting Uncle Fred sang, to Harry's accompaniment:

"The sun is shining, the grass is gfeen - the orange and palm trees sway;
There's never been such a day, in Beverly Hills LA.
But this is December the twenty-fourth - and I am longing to be up North...."

"That's it? That's the whole SONG?" queried Bing. It isn't, of course, and when he was shewn the sheet-music Bing replied: "Oh, now I am embarrassed - even the dog knew the song! I think I can take it from here...."

Need it be added that the next line is "I'M DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS...." for Bing must surely have concluded thirty-four of those forty Christmas Specials with his most identified song....

There remained only Bing's thanks to everyone, and to all of us watching "the joys of the holiday season every day of the year" and finally: "A Merry Christmas, Fred, from the Crosbys. There could hardly have been a more seasonal and delightful hour's viewing to herald in the Christmas holiday.

(Editor: Few, if any, will disagree with Bert Bishop's assessment of this "seasonal and delightful hour's viewing". Yet, the SUNDAY TIMES "review of the week" TV notes for Christmas week referred to the programme as a "yuk-yuk programme, with the two old-timers patting each other on the back". Even if that HAD happened with the two greatest entertainers of the century as they might be hailed, it would have been quite acceptable. Both have more than enough to be "patted on the back" about....yet, it wasn't like that at all. The programme was conspicuous for the absence of mutual self-congratulation on two glittering careers soundly based on pure talent. So why does even one of the "better-class papers" (I'm sure that's how they see themselves) deign to such gross inaccuracy? I sometimes wonder if the contemporary scene of mediocrity (with just a few exceptions) has not blunted the critical faculties of some of these self-described "critics". This may well be true for in those self-same notes it was recommended that a "concert" (sic) by the Bay City Rollers (if you'll forgive such an intrusion in BING!) "should not be missed." Perhaps that gets things in perspective?

I am beginning to think that Bing, so unique in so many ways, is perhaps the only artist who can introduce a religious note into a popular programme

without making us squirm with a degree of embarrassment? Bing's words - and naturally, whoever wrote them for him - struck a positive, new, approach which I found most effective; and as I like to hear Bing speak, or narrate, almost as much as I love to hear him sing, I found this part of the programme very acceptable. It is seemly, too, to remind us that Christmas is a religious festival; we can be forgiven perhaps for losing sight of this when one considers the sickening commercial event certain stratas endeavour to make it. And with considerable success, too. No, considering the enormous talent on view I thought the show was quite unpretentious: in short, excellent entertainment! And now, if BERT BISHOP will forgive the intrusion we'll get back to his chronicle.....

ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE MORNING....

The charisma of Christmas morning was assuredly enhanced by the BBC Radio 2 presentation of a specially-produced programme entitled CHRISTMAS WITH THE CROSBYS. This went out in stereo at 10.2 am on the morning of the 25th - the DAY itself. It proved to be one of the highlights of the entire Crosby Christmas, and the BBC is to be congratulated on its conception. The programme was devised and written by Charles Thompson, the author of the recent biography BING - thereby perhaps expiating some of his omissions in that tome! - and produced by Brian Willey. In all, it featured twenty-eight commercially-recorded Christmas songs by Bing and friends virtually covering a thirty-year period of Yuletide vocalising between 1942 and 1971. And between these songs Bing with his family again - Kathryn, Harry, Mary Frances and Nathaniel, spoke of the myths, legends and as much fact as is known surrounding and encompassing the holiday season. It was a unique event - as everyone recognised.

"The first time on British radio," proudly proclaimed the announcer, and to the orchestral strains of WHITE CHRISTMAS, Bing came over the airwaves wishing us all a Merry Christmas and reminding us of the significance of this "very important festival." Though a particularly "family" holiday Bing hoped that the lonely and hospitalized would find something extra special in the ninety minutes that we were to spend with him and his family in California through the medium of radio.

Bing introduced his family individually - ladies first and then the 'menfolk'. Each in turn sent their seasonal greetings and the programme was away to the first song. Bing and Kathy, and the children in turn, told the gospel story and gradually enlarged upon it which, though slightly encyclopaedic, produced a remarkably informative and informal dissertation on the meanings and origins of many of the facets of the season. As a musically illustrated history of "the greatest story ever told" it would be difficult to envisage a more popular format; certainly it was a feast of entertainment for us all by virtue of the largesse of Christmas songs and carols by Bing. Most of them were played in full - and in the following sequence:

I Wish You a Merry Christmas	1962	(Cont: When You Trim Your Christmas Tree	1971
Away in a Manger.	1955	Christmas Candles.	1964
Adeste Fideles.	1942	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.	1962
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen	1942	Snow	1954
Silent Night.	1947	Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let it...	1962
Christmas in Killarney.	1951	Winter Wonderland.	1962
Mele Kalikimaka	1950	Good King Wenceslas	1949
Do You Hear what I Hear?	1963	I Sing Noel.	1971
The First Nowell.	1955	The Holly and the Ivy	1962
Christmas Dinner Country Style	1963	Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly	1955
Twelve Days of Christmas.	1949	A Time to be Jolly.	1971
A Christmas Toast.	1971	And the Bells Rang.	1971
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer	1950	We Wish You the Merriest.	1964
Santa Claus is Comin' to Town	1943	White Christmas.	1947

Brightly shone the stars that morning, for sharing the musical honours and vocal rejoicing were the orchestras of John Scott Trotter, Paul Weston, Vic Schoen, Ralph Carmichael, Les Brown, Joseph Lilley, Simon Rady, the great Fred Waring (also currently celebrating 50 years in the business, by the way) and the musical arrangements of Messrs. Thompson, Halloran and Matz. Well featured were the Andrews Sisters, plus the voices of Peggy Lee, Trudy Stevens, Danny Kaye - and Frank Sinatra; and not by any means least the choral accompaniments of Norman Luboff, Max Terr, Jud Conlin with the Rhythmaires, Ken Darby and The Voices of Christmas. A glittering package indeed for our Christmas morning delectation.

> Bing closed the spoken part of the programme by expressing his pleasure at being able to join us this Christmas day from 6,000 miles away and wishing us well for the rest of the day; "....and a happy new year and - God Bless you all" and all the family's "Merry Christmas, everybody!" ringing in our ears the omnipresent strains of ol' faith - WHITE CHRISTMAS - concluded the holiday morning treat; could there have been a nicer way to herald the day? I think not.

THEN THERE WAS PARKINSON - AGAIN:

By way of another Christmas Day delight there was PARKINSON with the Bing-linked legend of showbiz, Bob Hope. The programme, on BBC1 TV went out at 11.30pm and was, in reality, a change of plan substitute for the originally scheduled Fred Astaire appearance on the show - seen finally on Saturday night 14 February. Perhaps it was felt that ITV had rather stolen a march with their Christmas Eve showing of the Bing/Fred Astaire hour. But whatever the reason it didn't keep BING off the screen. And this isn't to be wondered at, of course, when his droll, feuding confrere is anywhere around on the scene.

The programme followed the standard Michael Parkinson interview pattern, interpolating filmed sequences, the first of which came from the New Madison Square Garden Special which had "Packy East" Hope sparring with the legendary one-time world heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano. Harry Lillis Crosby turned out to be the referee - and victim during the hocu-pocus "fight" of the celebrated "pat-a-cake" routine from Bob and Rocky. That clip, incidentally, and others featuring Bing, will be seen here in March when the BBC televises Bob Hope's 25 YEARS IN TELEVISION SPECIAL, already shewn in the States.

> Later Parkinson announced: "We've got a message from one of your younger fans coming up on the screen in a moment. Too young to be let out to come to the show but on tape..." And a moment later there was Bing greeting Mike Parkinson from the studio where Kathryn records her daily programmes. Delighted that Parkinson "had found something for Bob Hope to do whilst he's hanging around London" Bing expanded on the theme by singing a complete parody chorus of THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY. Bing got in first with this musical cracker, but Hope crooned back:
>
> "That's something! Isn't it nice that he would stand up that long?"

This, clearly, was what the audience had come to see, and it drew the most applause in relation to the rest of the show.

"Tell us the truth now - when did you first meet?" asked Parkinson. "I was a Boy Scout and I saw this old lady waiting for the traffic light..and I walked over and helped her across and it turned out to be Bing," replied Bob. This was a preliminary gag that led to Bob reminiscing on their meeting in 1932 at the Capitol Theatre, New York, and the subsequent building of their association from variety days, through radio and films. It is an endearing relationship - quite unique in its endurance.

NO CROSS-WORDS!

"Have you ever had a cross word - a row?" Bob was asked. "No. You can't have a row with him - because he just walks away. He doesn't row with anybody. I was the loud mouth; if anything happened I'd say 'Well I'll go up and tell them', and Bing would

say 'Yeah..find out about it', and he'd go over to the golf course and wait."

Bob agreed with Parkinson that Bing takes life easy, but added that he loves to be on: "He's as 'hammy' as anybody. It's true! But I admire him for it because you have to be in our business. I sleep on a hook at night - but he's got a clove right there.." indicating his foot! "He's a delightful ham!"

Whilst discussing the ROAD films Bob expressed his own view that ROAD TO ZANZIBAR was the best of the series; he added his opinion that the success of those films was due to the ad libbing comments and the clowing. A sequence from MOROCCO was shewn where, in an unrehearsed moment a camel spat in Bob's eye. The scene was used in the film, of course, and Bob, after watching the clip, decided that Bing must have owned the disrespectful beast.

If Bob's prognostications prove correct there is to be another ROAD film - ROAD TO TOMORROW. "We're working on it now (the idea) and it takes here and in Saudi Arabia....we hope to shoot the picture in June - they're now working on the script. We both like the treatment and I hope a major studio likes it. I think they will because we've been asked by many a studio to see the script."

Bob closed the show with a suitable set of lyrics adapted to his famous signature tune - THANKS FOR THE MEMORY - which included the line:

".....his (Parkinson's) kindness was enormous, in contrast to the fee!"

Not an unknown facet of the BBC.....still, its our money they're saving!

AND SO TO BOXING DAY, 26th DECEMBER...

The date is noted because some overseas readers may not be acquainted with this peculiarly British appellation and, anyway, tradition or no, it is on the 27th December next Christmas. Be that as it may, last Boxing Day saw the BBC presenting its usual Christmas look at the world of Walt Disney with, for the first time, Bing as host.

Donald Duck and his errant nephews in a golfing sketch opened the programme and Bing observed that that first bit of film was especially for his benefit: "I've been known to whack the rubber about a bit." It came from THE DONALD DUCK STORY and Bing introduced a further excerpt from it called DONALD'S SNOW FIGHT. Meantime it was noted that Bing was comfortably seated in a Christmassy-decorated room surrounded by several models of Disney cartoon figures. His script related perfectly to the sequences, as might be expected, and one got the impression that he was actually watching and commenting as the film clips came along. "I must say, " said Bing, "with three nephews like that he's badly over-matched, referring to Donald.

Currently running in Britain is the compilation feature film THE BEST OF WALT DISNEY'S TRUE LIFE ADVENTURES, and part of this was Bing's next presentation - otters and seals - and he told us that SEAL ISLAND, the first of the 'true life' films, won an Academy Award. Certainly a fascinating and amusing piece of cinematography.

When this was over Bing was seen looking through a number of LP records, and noting how many great songs and albums have come from Disney pictures. Then the LP THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT came to the top of the pile: "How did that get in here?" queried Bing in mock surprise!

He went on to relate that Disney had made a two-story feature film called THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD. Not surprisingly, the ICHABOD half came to be the next object of our attention, for Bing narrated the story and sang the songs in this 1949 film. "Old Icky had got along pretty well but I'm afraid the ghost got to him down there in Sleepy Hollow." He told how much he had enjoyed making the film, and then was quickly introducing a couple of characters from THE APPLE DUMPLING GANG.

There followed an adventure film: RETURN OF THE BIG CAT - dramatic stuff with, as Bing noted, a "cliff-hanger" finish, and going on to relate youthful days spent watching the weekly PERILS OF PAULINE, a serial which had the unfortunate heroine invariably left in mortal danger. From the film MELODY TIME - "my kind of title, I guess" said Bing - came another

rather dramatic sequence whereby boy rescued girl from the swift flowing ice-floes of an erstwhile skating pond - a sparklingly seasonal cartoon - with a warning!

Bing related the plot and mentioned the stars of the British made film ONE OF OUR DINOSAURS IS MISSING, a spoof spy-thriller made at Pinewood and starring Derek Nimmo, Peter Ustinov and Helen Hayes: "Sounds like a real crazy film to me," noted Bing; and indeed it looked it in both the introductory feature on the making of the film and during the actual film sequence itself. And no doubt Bing recalled the TV show he did here with Bob Hope when Derek Nimmo a few years back when to everyone's astonishment, including Bing's and Bob's, Derek Nimmo demonstrated his ability to manipulate his toes individually, would you believe? I still vividly recall those bare feet stuck up over the table!

> Bing resumed: "Well, we've come around to cartoon time again, and this is one that everybody seems to like - JUNGLE BOOK. You remember when Mowgli is attacked by Shere Khan the tiger and he's saved by Baloo the bear?" One of his shorter introductions but an appropriate choice for Bing because his old side-kick Phil Harris provides the voice for the droll buffoonery of the brave Baloo.

Introducing the next cartoon film Bing concluded his contribution to the programme with these words: "I guess that's just about the sum and substance; its been a lot of fun sitting here and watching all these great films with you. I hope you've enjoyed it as well. So, I'll just say goodbye for now and I hope to see you again very soon. As its Christmas Day why don't we share our Christmas with the LADY AND THE TRAMP?"

> The final section of that popular Disney cartoon film was an eminently suitable selection with which to end a very pleasant interlude in the festivities, with Bing on the screen for a little over five minutes, not including the ICHABOD sequence. As noted earlier on, a programme based on Disney films is now traditional with the BBC - and excellent holiday fare they make for all ages. A celebrity of some kind usually introduces the programme: and this year the BBC hit the jackpot with Bing. And in passing, one can appreciate how well the job was done when it is remembered that it was actually recorded around September/October with Christmas not in sight - even though just around the corner for the shops' Santa Claus's!

It was warming, too, to realise just how eagerly Bing was snapped up by the BBC for all kinds of programmes during his stay here last year. Yet another instance occurred on Dec. 27 when Bing found himself "castaway of the week" on that now well-peopled Desert Isle.... but before dealing with that I must close with the filmic finale we had on 30 December when the penultimate ROAD film, ROAD TO BALI was screened on BBC-1 at 2pm. This is a technicolour romp which might well be described as the last of the best of the series.

> In all we were treated to well over seven hours of Bing on TV and radio, and the two television/radio periodicals for the Christmas fortnight featured a goodly number of pictures, anecdotes and references to him. The TV TIMES front cover had a ghastly caricature of Bing and Fred together, with others, in a balloon basket; but perhaps this unfortunate illustration can be overlooked in the light of the marvellous Christmas cornucopia of Crosby. As somebody once said sometime: YOU'VE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD!

TURNING TO RADIO - AND THE DISCS FOR THE ISLE...

Yes, back to the sound medium, the distinguished castaway for the last DESERT ISLAND DISCS of 1975 was of course our globe-trotting "hero" of many exotic roads. Shipwrecked without Hope, nor even Lamour! Bing found himself contemplating this musically inclined proposition with the long-standing interviewer Roy Plomley on Radio 4, 7.2 pm on 27 December (repeated at 12.27pm on the 29th) who introduced the programme thus:

> "On our Desert Island this week is an American entertainer who's been part of all our lives. He's made more records than anyone ever has; he's starred in getting on for a hundred films; he's still hard at work and indestructible - its Bing Crosby..."

Bing came back with the comment that he hardly did any work - just "mostly hunt, fish, shoot, and play golf and travel, and [illegible] my children."

"Taking you away from all that, could you endure loneliness?" asked Plomley.

"Oh yes, I can get along by myself quite well....I love to ruminate like all old codgers, do you know..."

"What would you want music to do for you on the Island - evoke the past - bring you great performances?"

"Those records that I've chosen would mostly entertain and, I think, create certain moods in me when I play them...I'd open up with something lively and one of the most lively records I know of is one that was made by my brother Bob: SOUTH RAMPART STREET PARADE. A wonderful arrangement and very exciting."

Keeping it in the family, Roy Plomley noted, after which the seconds record was immediately chosen. Bing selected Claude Debussy's CLAIR DE LUNE for its peaceful, easily understood, mood - "..for when I'm a little restless." Played here by the L.S.O. under the baton of Stanley Black.

There followed some discussion on Bing's early life and ancestry. "Crosby," observed Plomley, " is a Scandinavian name from way back. "It must be way, way, back because I thought it was English," interrupted Bing. "My father's family came from England at the time of the Mayflower. We were descended from Edwin Brewster who was a Plymouth Elder, I believe." After re-affirming how he came to be called "Bing", and that he came from a musical family, and similar biographical material, Bing went through the usual steps that took him on the road to fame, beginning with his buddy, Al Rinker. This concluded at a significant turning point in his life - going solo- by introducing the next disc:

"One of the greatest arrangements I've ever heard and played superlatively well by one of the marvellous bandleaders - Benny Goodman. An excellent example of how to arrange a popular song. Without further ado the strains of AND THE ANGELS SING, with vocal by Martha Tilton 'vintage around 1939' fell easily on our ears. It is interesting to note this choice and recall the research that has been done in the past to ascertain whether or not Bing had ever recorded with Benny Goodman. It seems he has not, and B.G. is one of the very few top-line leaders Bing did not record with.

Roy Plomley observed that radio was a much bigger and influential medium in those days and continued the biographical tracing right up to the 'challenging roles' of such films as LITTLE BOY LOST, THE COUNTRY GIRL, and STAGECOACH. Bing felt that his toughest acting job of all was MAN ON FIRE - "but it didn't do too well." Plomley refrained from further comment and the fourth disc went on the turntable.

"Record number four is a very natural selection not only because its by the great Glenn Miller Band, but it always reminds me of a beautiful ballroom full of nicely dressed young people dancing to some marvellous music. The opening bars of MOONLIGHT SERENADE, right away I'm in that environment - and I love it."

Bing brushed aside the 'high' statistics relating to his recording output and discussed with his interviewer a little of the year's activities. Roy Plomley asked if Bing was ever nervous, or superstitious. The answer was basically no, except for a 'couple of little things' relating to superstition. "I wouldn't walk under a ladder; that's just being careful! I never leave a hat on a bed." And old show business superstition apparently, the origin of which Bing didn't know. He also throws spilt salt over his left shoulder; so, he's much Mr. Average on THAT score!

"Where's this island gonna be," queried Bing. Told the choice was his Bing elected for the South Pacific where he could swim and fish in tropical comfort. Possibly reflecting the mood of such idyllic surroundings was Bing's choice for his fifth record: LIEBESTRAUM, played by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy, who "always has a marvellous orchestra" Bing reflected. As the strains of Liszt's famous Nocturne diéd away they went straight on to record number six: "I've got a good one...a famous record by a famous clarinetist, a good friend of mine. He made wonderful success out of the music business because he's a super musician, and this is his record of BEGIN THE BEGUINE - Artie Shaw."

Bing must surely be the "compleat angler" having tried his hand at every variation as was discussed here; his current "fishing kick now is dry-fly for trout, or wet-fly for Atlantic salmon", and with such expertise he reckoned he would be able to catch and cook all he might need on this lonely shore. But when asked if he could build a house he replied: "no way, No way! I couldn't fix a safety pin."

There followed a seemingly slight contradiction to this in his next answer when he thought he might construct a raft, perhaps not for escape, though he would try:

> "If there was any way I would try and get off...there's too many things I'd like to get back to. Failing that, if there wasn't any way to get off, I'd just play my records and ruminate."

"Right, what's your seventh record?"

"The seventh record is another example of a marvellous arrangement for dance bands. Tommy Dorsey's great disc of the SONG OF INDIA. And the record was duly played though, like all the others, not in full. And then Bing found himself choosing his final disc.

"For a closer, Roy, I thought I ought to choose something peaceful and relaxing. Its the Intermezzo from CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA. The reason I chose this its a beautiful, beautiful, piece of music, and I know that if I'm going to be alone on this island for an indefinite period of time I'm going to want to pray once in a while, and to close with this music might impel me to bend a pious knee..." which I felt was a typical piece of Crosby terminology!

A flowing full-bodied orchestral rendering of "rustic chivalry", played by the Orchestra of La Scala, Milan, with conductor Herbert Von Carian followed. Of the eight records played, Bing's 'rough assignment' in selecting just ONE if he had to brought forth the response:

> "I would probably take SOUTH RAMPART STREET PARADE - its so uplifting, so spirited."

For his luxury item - nothing useful allowed - Bing chose a guitar. He expressed the belief that he played it well enough and that "out there alone I'd get to be very good at it - but nobody would hear me. What a pity!" Plomley replied: "When you come back - a new career!" "Aah," said Bing, "if I ever get off!"

When it came to the question of one book, apart from the Bible, Shakespeare or any big encyclopaedia Bing asked:

> "Before I make a choice, am I going to have any writing materials?"
>
> "Aha, no," answered Roy Plomley.
>
> "I'd still like to take this book I have in mind. I could probably write - get a sharp stick and write on palm leaves, or do something - I'd like to take ROGET'S THESAURUS out there with me, because with that I could maybe do some useful writing."

The book was well chosen for it is the standard work of reference for any aspiring writer, full of synonyms, autonums and English words and phrases - over 50,000 entries which would ensure that Bing would be able to bring his earlier autobiography right up to date in truly literary style! The programme closed with thanks to Bing for being the castaway - and a personal thought that Bing may never endure such prolonged solitude to the loss of us all.

Reviewing the records Bing chose it is noteworthy that, except for a vocal chorus on AND THE ANGELS SING, there was no vocalising, either popular or classical. Now, I wonder what that indicates - if anything? A very musical and varied choice, nevertheless.

VERA LYNN'S DRESSING ROOM - AND BING!

On Wednesday, 14 January, Vera Lynn was featured in the Thames Television production THERE GOES THAT SONG AGAIN. There was a quiz on Bing and she was asked about him appearing on her TV show late last year. It was their first meeting and Bing came to her dressing-room

where she was taking a cup of tea. Vera asked him if he would like some but Bing declined, producing a large carton of ice-cream and a substantial cake, all of which he consumed - just before going out to sing on the show!

IN THE RADIO FOUR Quiz programme QUOTE - UNQUOTE, broadcast on January 18 in the section where the contestants are invited to disregard accepted quotations and suggest what was really said, Nigel Rees asked: "According to the Christmas carol, 'Good King Wenceslas looked out on the feast of Stephen...when the snow lay round about, deep and crips and even...' What did he say when he looked out - something that's NOT reported in Neale's carol? Alan Coren immediately replied:

"IT LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER WINNER FOR BING CROSBY." He scored his mark!

PETE MURRAY'S "OPEN HOUSE":

This programme on Radio Two has a quiz spot entitled CARRY ON SINGING in which 'phone-in contestants are invited to continue a song where the recorded featured artist is stopped. On Monday, January 26, after two conzecutive weeks of twice-daily failures, a visiting American was able to name the song and carry on singing the chorus after hearing Bing sing the verse of TOO MARVELLOUS FOR WORDS. He duly won vouchers for three BBC LPs, which was very nice for him but a bit of a blot on some twenty-one British listeners, most of whom seemed stuck on MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU, and YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE. However, some atonement was made two weeks later when an 89-year-old man guessed the rest of Bing's song I'M GONNA SIT RIGHT DOWN AND WRITE MYSELF A LETTER - and sang it right through!

THE MAGIC OF THE GREAT OUTDOORS -

"Fisherman, golfer, ornithologist - Bing Crosby talks about "the magic of the Great Outdoors', where all the sounds are natural - and what it means to him". Thus the caption to a photograph of fly fisherman Bing which appeared on the relevant page of RADIO TIMES for January 26 relating to a Radio Four programme, SOUNDS NATURAL, broadcast at 7.30 pm. Bing began by congratulating Derek Jones on the clever title to the nature programme, and went on to discuss his boyhood days spent in fishing and the general observation of wildlife in the mountainous north-west region of America. The many lakes among the undeveloped areas of Spokane, Washington, and the adjacent State of Idaho, formed by the run-off from the mighty Canadian Rocky Mountains, created a natural habitat for the fish, game, birds and general fauna that instil a great natural interest in most youngsters - and interest which has remained with Bing. A wonderful start in life for any boy, particularly.

This programme was notable for revealing another of Bing's accomplishments - his bird impressions which surprised a lot of people. He began with the rarely seen Loon, similar to the British Great Northern Diver, and probably the oldest order of American birds. Each of Bing's impressions was followed by an actual recording of the bird's call.

Being a wildfowler, to use a British term, Bing is well acquainted with the many varieties of duck and geese and it was interesting to hear the comparative names. He certainly knows his duck calls under different circumstances, and the methods of flight. I can't say that I myself have actually seen a duck do an 'Immerman roll' - but its a fascinating thought!

Bing took the opportunity to lay the fictional belief that field sportsmen were a contributory factor to what, in many places, is our disappearing wild life. The reverse is the truth as Bing expounded in a dissertation on the field sports' instigation and support of breeding and preservation, and by the sponsoring of sanctuaries against the encroachment of civilisation.

Inevitably, there was reference tothe songs that Bing has sung which feature birds in the lyric, or in the title. He sang a snatch of MY BLUE HEAVEN.....'when whi-poor-wills call..' MR. MEADOWLARK...'you've got a lot of singing (sic) to do." and after admitting that he couldn't describe a meadowlark - "I'm colour-blind" - Bing was heard singing with Johnny Mercer from the first sixteen bars of their commercial recording of that song.

From MEADOWLARK to BOB WHITE; there was a brief impression from Bing followed by the actual bird call and then into the commercial recording with Connee Boswell. "Fantastic!" expostulated Derek Jones, "the Bob White call actually appears in the song." Bing impersonated a Valley Quail and then the Whi-poor-will - all very accurately.

> "I must tell you this," said Bing, going on to relate an anecdote on his trying to register a name for a racehorse sired by 'Seabird'. After submitting many bird names and being refused every time he remembered a punning story told to him by hunter Bill Ryan. It seemed that the 'fowlers had had no sport and eventually a flock of terns came over. "One of the hunters picked up a bunch of big stones and started throwing them at the terns. His companion said, 'What ever are you doing?' "Well, my father told me to never leave a tern unstoned!'

Just for a gag, Bing sent in "Tern Unstoned" as the name for his horse and it was accepted. He refused to pay 100 dollars to have it changed so now he's stuck with it - and the explanation.

Derek Jones suggested Bing had enjoyed a wonderful opportunity to study exotic wild life during the making of all those ROAD pictures, to which Bing replied: "We made all those pictures right in the studio, Derek; we never left town!" Bing asserted that he is a well-travelled man, however, as we all know, despite the Hollywood hokum. I cannot help feeling however, that SOME of those ROAD locales were filmed elsewhere.

ON DERWENT WATER.....

Bing described the making of the salmon fishing film on Derwent Water in Cumberland. This was the 1966 visit during which so many ICC members made the trek to Wordsworth country to meet Bing - and which resulted, incidentally, in some great stories of the experience. The grand story of the late Leslie Phythian comes to mind in this respect.

> "I must have made nine thousand casts to get three or four salmon for the picture," continued Bing. "We worked, I'm telling you! I finally caught one - a very good fish - got him up to the bank...and the cameraman says: 'Cut! I gotta reload!' This salmon was about 30 lbs...well, you know what happened, he got away and it was another three days before we even got another salmon!" A true fisherman's tale which brought the programme almost to its end. Bing was asked if he had the power to save one animal in all the world, which would it be? He replied: "The quail. I love the quail - and ducks. I love 'em all, really."

To the strains of GONE FISHIN' - as performed by Bing and Louis - this most entertaining programme came to a close. A little over 24 hours later Bing was again featured in yet another sporting facet of his very full and varied life.

THAT GOLF TOURNAMENT....

It was 8.10pm on BBC-2 TV that the third match of the Sports Marketing & Management-promoted International Pro-Celebrity ten-match golf tournament was screened, having been tele-recorded some time last summer. The contestants were paired Peter Oosterhuis and Val Doonican for Great Britain versus Tom Weiskopf and Bing for the USA - with Great Britain up two matches to nil.

The games had been played at the glorious King's Course at Gleneagles Hotel, with the giant mountain a vast natural backdrop, drenched with the sun shining in an unbroken blue sky. The matches consist of four balls played over nine selected holes, of which six were shewn in the programme. Each hole is named after a nearby locality - Tappit Hen, Braid's Brawest, Howe Hope, Wee Bogle - which in itself stamps the very breath of the braes and burns of Scotland upon it. Clearly Bing was truly in his element and he played some remarkably good golf. As in all things he does, his golf is so relaxed and, it would seem, effortless. No wasted energy in any shot, few of which did very little less than intended. The contrast to Val

Doonican who, rather surprisingly, is an aggressive player, was very obvious, and Val was the first to admit that Bing had the edge on him in that department, too.

> Henry Longhurst introduced the programme and Peter Allis commentated and spoke to each of the contestants. Much the usual kind of chat: Bing ran over the golfing highlights of his then current visit - and exceptionally long list of courses was mentioned - disucssing his sons' exploits and other delights of our excellent summer. Remember?

As the game processed the two Americans had a permanent edge over the British team, and it was interesting to note that the "celebrities" - Bing especially - looked very good alongside the "professionals" who, it was noted, gave appropriate instruction to their respective "amateur" partners. Admittedly, the celebrities were given a stroke at most holes, but all played very well to a good gallery - with no clowning, though on the green of the short 135-yard 15th Wee Bogle, Val Doonican took a sight along a teasingly advanced putt and lightly crooned: "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas..." The spectators laughed and Bing came back with: "When Irish eyes are smiling - well, he's got an easy putt...." "You've made it hard now," said Val - and proved the point by missing it!

Tom Weiskopf and Bing won the match pretty handsomely but both celebrities were presented with an engraved glass decanter - Waterford Crystal, no less. Perhaps the nicest 'award' was a remark by Peter Allis about Bing: "One of the greatest figures of the world of entertainment ever known - perhaps will ever know."

> Oh, and Val sincerely said how he had been looking forward to meeting Bing - not having met him before; and now he was playing golf with him! It was the realisation of his ambition - to which Bing made the eternal reply: "Oh Val, you gotta raise your goals....."

Editor: So, Bert concludes a really marathon stint on Bing's TV and radio appearances - a considerably inflated number of such appearances due to the alacrity with which all kinds of producers and commentators seized on Bing's lengthy - and triumphant - visit to us last year.

> I've never watched golf before - except in fragments - for in truth I am a heretic: in short, I think it a stupid game! All right, I'm busily ducking from the slings and arrows of the addicts. Seems so silly to whack a silly little ball all round lovely sceney....who was it said - golf spoils a good walk. Actually, I prefer to see people kicking a silly big leather ball into a goal-net! But, I had to watch Bing; and even with my limited knowledge it was clear that Bing is a real player: truly a man of many parts. As Bing swung so easily and effortlessly I thought to myself "That can't go far....." but it did, and dam' close to the hole most times. As Bert Bishop pointed out, Val swung at it like the village blacksmith hitting sixes at cricket - and with roughly the same accuracy. Actually, I had the pleasure of the company of Jim Ramsey for this TV show - Jim was scheduled to caddy for Bing a couple of years ago but, unluckily for Jim, Bing had to cancel his British visit that year. But Jim knows the course intimately and was able to give an extra-commentary on what was going on. Bing's performance came as no surprise to Jim Ramsay, either. He's always known that Bing is a very good golfer indeed.

And did you notice that Bing's attire was comparatively sombre - for him! It was a real game of golf with no more clowning that any four players would have indulged in - though as always, Bing demonstrated the richness of his personality. Every remark was congenial - and apt. His remarks, on acceptance of the award, were completely apposite - well aware of Wateford Crystal - and of the ability of his opponents. Mind, it didn't convert me to golf - but it was a lovely programme to see.

To a lesser extent, I was interested to see the famous Gleneagles Hotel in the distance - this has a "popular music" connection in that it was the hotel from which Henry Hall first broadcast - and became known for - around 1931, long before his triumph with the BBC Dance Orchestra.

Reader's letters

Always a popular feature, letters have been somewhat neglected of late because of pressure on space.. and the first letter (not to mention the second!) are relevant....

TIM BROOKS, 1940 80th Str., Jackson Heights, NEW YORK 11370, USA: I must in honesty express one member's misgivings about the type of article which seems to have predominated in recent issues, which is a function of contributions I know. There does seem to have been a rather heavy predominance of reflections, opinions, newspaper clippings and present-day reportage (some of it a bit indulgent - "What I had for breakfast on the day I glimpsed Bing!") This to the exclusion of real research, either biographical or discographical. Certainly there is a place for both kinds of article in BING and I too enjoy keeping up with Bing's current activities.....

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and the next letter from: FRANK SYLVESTER, 7917 Pinegrove Ave. Parma, Ohio, 44129, USA:

I want to say that you boys are doing a great job on this publication and I enjoy it very much. I'm very, very, pleased the way you people of the United Kingdom have treated Bing and I'm sure that he is more than pleased. Its great to see THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT listed in the British charts; each week I check BILLBOARD for this LP and the latest issue shows it at No. 29.

So, says the Editor: Tim Brooks must excuse us: we're not used to having Bing here for prolonged periods! Unlike the Americans! And when we do get him here we're going to make the most of it....that's why BING has, understandably I feel, been full of stories telling of how "I Met Bing!" I must say, on a more serious note, that it does seem that Bing may be just a little more honoured by his British admirers than in the vast expanses of the States. Though, I could be very wrong indeed. See this letter, also from the States:

HOWARD B. DANIEL, 2227 N. Lexington Street, Arlington, Virginia 22205, USA: Bing has made five appearances on American TV since August last (this was written mid-Dec last) The one I liked best was his appearance on the syndicated Merv Griffin Show. MERV MADE THE MISTAKE OF TREATING BING JUST LIKE ANOTHER GUEST AND IT DIDN'T WORK OUT TOO WELL. Merv announced: "Now, here's Bing Crosby....!"

> BING STEPPED FROM THE EDGE OF THE STAGE UP TO THE MICROPHONE NEAR THE EDGE AND STARTED MOUTHING THE WORDS TO A PRE-RECORDED SONG. BUT THE AUDIENCE WOULDN'T STOP APPLAUDING AND CHEERING! BING FINALLY GAVE UP TRYING TO DO THE SONG AND SMILED AND WAVED TO THE AUDIENCE. MERV THEN CAME OUT, WAVING HIS ARMS AND YELLING "CUT, CUT!" to the man in the control booth. I made a tape of this broadcast (Bing's part perhaps 25 minutes long)....I have open reel machine only....

Well, that's better, isn't it! I think, on the whole, Britain, moronic as most of its "pop" music scene may be, is more receptive to Bing's type of entertainment (sanity can prevail!) that the American scene which, on the word of Ken Barnes, is almost completely orientated to heavy, black, rock! Still, it does seem that Bing's US appearances usually do prove to be "show-stoppers"! And that's how it should be. Incidentally, the TV show Leo Lynn referred to in his letter to Leslie Gaylor read as follows a la HOLLYWOOD REPORTER:

"A Bell Telephone Jubilee will be the next new special to be televised from S-H, a 90-minute collage of old clips from 20 years of shows intercut with current stars in performance. The show will air in mid-March and commemorates the 100th anniversary of Bell Telephone. We have this entire library of fabulous semi-classical and popular shows featuring Casals, Heifetz, Nureyev, Louis Armstrong, Chevalier - just a wealth of material. WE'VE SET BING CROSBY TO HOST THE SHOW AND MARVIN HAMLISCH WILL DIRECT THE BELL TELEPHONE SYMPHONY.....

Editor: Sounds another good show - and demonstrating that Bing remains just the right man for such an occasion.

BINGO

IT was only a golden oldie . . . but Bing Crosby's joke really hit the jackpot.

Golfing partner Sandra Post couldn't stop laughing as she and the Old Groaner competed in a pro-am preliminary to the Colgate European Women's Open Championship at Sunningdale yesterday.

Bing, 71, and his old pal Bob Hope, 72, took part without success.

Picture by KENT GAVIN.

KEITH HYDE, "El-Bingo", 21 Carbeena Parade, West Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia, 3081:

You certainly provided us "Colonials" with a wonderful coverage of all the Bing activities in the BING IN BRITAIN special No. 39 - and what a terrific amount of activities these were to cover! I've never known Bing to be so active in so many fields, in such a short time, especially while on a visit to Britain.

It seems to me that to have everything on tape one would have had to be glued to the radio and TV from early morning to late at night, not to mention the fact that one would have to be prepared to drop everything at a moment's notice and rush off to the recording studios, the TV station, or the golf course - and from one end of the country to the other! I've had lots of letters from my good friends in UK but it appears that not ONE of them managed to catch all the Bing appearances on radio, TV &c. along with the times, dates, programme source, etc. pertaining to Bing's visit. This could be compiled from readers' letters and would prove a very handy guide for those wishing to collect ALL these programmes on tape. In a recent letter Bob Roberts admits even HE did not get all these programmes down on tape and there were no doubt others that he missed - not having even known about them!

Sooner or later someone will get around to compiling a listing of Bing's TV appearances and therefore these listings would prove to be of great value for reference to anyone contemplating such a listing in future.

Keith is a very well-known and respected collector in Australia - and everywhere else, for that matter. It was literally as Keith imagined: we just never knew when Bing was going to turn up on radio & TV. As we remarked earlier, the BBC (and ITV) showed great enthusiasm to get Bing on their shows. Nevertheless, I think all Bing's appearances here have been reported in BING, and in their chronological order, by the redoubtable BERT BISHOP over the past three issues or so. And, he has most of them on tape, too. Perhaps Bing will one day make that long-delayed trip to Australia and it will the turn of all the "mates" Down Under to laud Bing. Yet, the vast distances of Australia will present problems not encountered in this tight little island - which nevertheless proved too big in some cases. And the surprise of some of these visits was exemplified when we reported the chagrin of Nottingham and Yorkshire members who learned AFTERWARDS that Bing had actually visited one of their local "pubes". Not only visited, but SANG IN ONE OF THEM! It is a whimsical thought that it would be impossible to calculate how much working time was lost in Britain in 1975 due to Bing's visit - people were flocking to golf courses, often 400 miles from, say, Southampton, to Scotland - and vice-versa! They flocked to the BBC studios, the ITV studios in Leeds, the recording studios in Bond Street, London.....and it was invariably a working day! Bing sympathises, most sincerely, for our economic difficulties - see his Christmas message. Ironic that he might have caused some of 'em! I'm kiddin', of course. Keith's address is there if anyone can help with tapings of Bing's appearances; you would be assured of a warm response from Keith.

DICK PEARSON, 45 Park View Rd., London, N.17: I read with great interest the write-up on the Leeds meeting; it was a great show by all accounts and the presence of Ken Barnes must have been a really tremendous experience - fantastic! New album themes are certainly not easy. My own idea would be for a light-hearted love song approach, calling the album LAUGH AND CALL IT LOVE, using that song and others of that ilk, such as RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD. There are many like that, staying away from the heavier ballad. Much as I like Bing singing ballads I feel that at this stage of his career a whimsical look at love would be an excellent theme following on, really, from THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT, or even THAT'S WHAT LOVE IS ALL ABOUT! Like you, I was amazed that anyone could call Pete Moore's orchestra "weedy" but having said that I must say that my wife and children are always telling me how much better Como's backing is than Bing's. You just cannot please everyone.

Editor: Excellent them, I feel - and we could go on with the MEMOIR idea - a WESTERN MEMOIR, or a COWBOY MEMOIR! Why do they have to change for change sake I wonder - Country and Western. Why don't they call 'em Cowboy songs any more. Bing's sung 'em all!

To further illustrate the truly International aspect of Bing members, let's move to NEW ZEALAND, and NEIL O'BRIEN, 4 Wychbury Str., Spreydon, Christchurch 2. :

From all that I have read it appears that the general consensus of opinion is that Bing's best recording period was the early 'Thirties. Well I for one don't go along with those views. I'll concede that generally the quality of the material may have been a little superior to Bing's later offerings but I don't see this as a valid argument. But as its Bing's tonsils, or larynx, we're discussing I find the tenor-like quality of Bing's voice during the early 30's no where near as pleasing as say from the late Thirties onwards when it had taken on a true baritone-like quality.

But perhaps the reason for my preference for Bing's middle and later periods is due to the fact that it was during the middle 'Forties, and as an impressionable teenager, that I first became a Crosby addict, I don't really know. For me, my favour records are by and large the more obscure titles. Things like DAY DREAMING, WELCOME TO MY DREAMS, GIVE ME THE SIMPLE LIFE, MY HEART IS A HOBO, THE BEST THING FOR YOU, THE MAGIC WINDOW SURE THING, and YOU'RE WONDERFUL. Coming right up-to-date some of my sure favourites are THE STRAIGHT LIFE, BOTH SIDES NOW, SNOWBIRD and HAVE A NICE DAY. I guess you would have to say I'm a Crosby 'modernit'. PS. I managed to get an article on Bing printed in the N.2 Listener, which is equivalent to your RADIO TIMES, with a circulation of about one million...

Editor: Well done Neil...as for your 'modernist', well, I've long held that it is the precise time you "discovered" Bing that sets your taste. The same goes for football, cricket, dance bands, entertainers generally....it must be true (if you'll pardon the early 30s touch!) for what provoked that interest! Yet, the chances are that Neil will end up scouring the earth for Early Thirties' records! Such is Crosbyana. I feel a very pertinent point when discussing Bing's "periods" is the breath-taking NEWNESS of such singing. Nothing quite like it ever before; Bing the trend-setter supreme. But, I am quite happy to let any member remain secure with his "period"...its an absorbing pursuit anyway. As we have found out....but one last word, I think it was inevitable that Bing, being human, intensely so, just had to mature. And that maturity brought.... the smooth balladeer, not to mention the measured baritone qualities. But then, for me he's always been baritone. Why, in the 30s it was the LOW notes we used to rave about! This tenor view always baffles me.

Back home now, and to JACK LISTER, 1 Harley Bank, Low Bentham, Lancaster. Jack was, and remains, adamant that he had a 78rpm record of Bing singing WHITE CHRISTMAS complete with verse:

> No! You did NOT misunderstand me. The WHITE CHRISTMAS with a verse was by Bing alone. I am delighted there has been some response and I am still hopeful someone will come up with an answer. A point has crossed my mind which may help: the record I bought would have been obtained somewhere en route UK/Singapore - perhaps that throws a different light on the matter?

Editor: No Jack, it doesn't matter. The "bible", by which I mean THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY discography lists all Bing's records as issued world-wide; and there is no inling at all that Bing ever made a 78 with the verse of the famous song included. The response I got was "YES, there is a verse to WHITE CHRISTMAS - so and so sings it...." Well, we knew there was a verse - and FRED ASTAIRE PROVED IT AGAIN BY COINCIDENCE ON CHRISTMAS EVE - but nobody knows of a record with Bing singing the verse! Nobody! Sorry Jack - but as you remain so sure I wonder if - did Bing sing the verse in HOLIDAY INN? - someone pirated the soundtrack of the film "overseas"? Its the only possible answer.

READERS ARE RECOMMENDED TO KEEP THE PRINTED LIST OF "BINGPICS" AVAILABLE, FOR IT IS NOT THE INTENTION TO PRINT IT IN EVERY ISSUE OF "BING". ADDITIONS TO THE LIST WILL, OF COURSE, BE LISTED AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE.

AND - DON'T FORGET PLEASE - YOUR ITEMS FOR "TRADING POST" ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER!

JOHN KIRBY, Stefanienstrasse 1, 763 Lahr, Schwarzwald, Germany: About myself, in answer to your invitation, I am a Canadian civilian and am employed by the Canadian Armed Forces here in Lahr. A happy circumstances in all but that I seemed to be surrounded by a Crosby-less desert. Paris would be the nearest adequate source for his discs but alas my visits there are far too rare. So you can imagine what your BING means to me, especially in that it offers me the chance to make contact with other membbers and perhaps fill in a few gaps in my collection - these gaps, by the way, remain considerable!

Editor: Well, there's John address; its nice to have him with us.

A.F.BRUETON, 175 Staines Rd. Laleham, Staines, Midd'x: I would like to send my warm congratulations on producing such a very fine and readable magazine. It bubbles with enthusiasm and I wish I had read it from issue No. 1. I have been a lover and supporter of Bing since 1932 when he sang PLEASE in "The Big Broadcast" of 1932. One other song of the PLEASE/I SURRENDER, DEAR era which seems to have disappeared, to my regret, is BUDDY CAN YOU SPARE A DIME. It is not even included in the 10 sided musical autobiography recently reissued by MCA - and certainly not in the fine WORLD RECORDS set.

Walking down the Strand in January of last year at the time of Bing's serious operation, I can remember seeing the evening paper placard: BING ILL. Just those two words. Can you think of anyone else in all the world, entertainment business or not, who would simply have a nickname mentioned in this way?

I would dearly love, if it were possible, to read some of the earlier issues of BING. Is there any where I could borrow these, paying postage both ways, and of course, taking the greatest care possible - and returning them safely? I would be most grateful if you can help in this way....

Editor: Well, will anyone? Its a heartfelt - and fair - offer. A 1932 devotee, you will note! And just to show the age-less appeal of the old Maestro: the bubbling enthusiasm of a lad mixed up with taking his "A" level exams., his driving lessons (!), - and Bing!

MARTIN MATHER, 23 Pennington Road, West Moors, Dorset, BH22 0JQ:

This is about the first time I've got around to maintaining my correspondence since I started my "A" levels; I made special arrangements to watch Parkinson (one needs to in a TV family)...seems ages ago now but I would have really enjoyed "fighting" for a ticket myself. Having read the "off-camera" information in BING perhaps the watching audiences in the studio had a better time than we did at home watching the recorded version! I received my ICC tie and I am pleased with it...but a more expensive, silk, trendier tie that can be identified at more than four feet might be thought about. I'm a bit of an artist myself and would like to see a bigger motif. Perhaps the designer liked people coming up to him with a magnifying glass! But, I AM pleased with the tie....congratulations to Bing on making six new records. Wow! How does he do it? Such energy makes me feel ashamed....bit expensive and I'll have to save up to get them all. After paying for driving lessons and when I'm thro' with my education...I might want Mr. Crosby's phone number so that perhaps I might call him - when I'm rich enough!

I'm pleased to tell you I watched or heard EVERY Bing appearance over the Christmas... beginning with watching WHITE CHRISTMAS for the fourth time...what a place Bing's got tho' (the Astaire show now)! I missed a party to hear the Crosby's radio programme which was entertaining AND educational though some of the Christmas facts I wasn't too sure about. I'm in agreement with Jack Hargreaves about the significance of Christmas Holly! But Mr. Crosby always has such good taste for entertainment - as this past Christmas certainly proved...then there was Bob Hope. I suppose you could say that Bing and Bob are stars of PARAMOUNT importance? A Happy 1976 to all - bit late!

Editor: Whoops! Today's youth! And to think we used to club together in 1932 to buy

a 2/6d Brunswick - 12½p to Martin and the other youngsters! Wonder what happened to those "co-operative" records? Come to that, what happened to all the years..... Martin was thoughtful enough to send me a pile of cuttings relating to the Christmas Bing appearances, too. At this point we must suspend Readers' Letter to make way for a truly....

STARTLING ADDITION TO KEEPING TRACK !!

MUSIC FOR PLEASURE: MFP 50249
"BING CROSBY - WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY" ! Price: £1.25p or less....

Startling is perhaps not the word - SENSATIONAL might be more apt! Consider this and judge for yourselves: Eleven titles recorded in 1957 - plus one recorded, would you believe, in 1931!

A lovely cover, rivalling the WINDMILL recent issue featuring a modern but highly attractive picture of Bing as he is, sporting a blue hat from Warner's Golf Resort, the photo virtually taking up the whole of the front cover. Same picture though smaller on the back.

This is virtually the NEW TRICKS (for an OLD DOG) album, so called - in 1959! This must be a very popular reissue indeed in 1976 for so many readers. Your Editor himself unaccountably missed this album though all the tracks are held on singles, EPs, or tape. (Not unaccountably: I was abroad at the time and temporarily suspended collecting!)

And surely this album has been rushed out because of its similarity to the new SOUTHERN MEMOIR? If not, it is a coincidence of considerable proportions, I think.

Not the least of that coincidence, in view of what has been said earlier, is this 1959 version of GEORGIA ON MY MIND! Sung, need it be rubbed in, with the true, nostalgic yearning, beautifully demonstrated by Bing, that the song shouts for....complete with that quiet, whistling, introduction....it also contains ALABAMY BOUND to equate with SOUTHERN MEMOIR. The record is, of course, of Decca origin, now available to MFP(EMI) by virtue of MCA.

> But what inspiration was it that included the 1931 version of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY - yes, the title is given in this fulsome manner; as it was in 1931?

The tracks have been re-channelled for stereo - which will appal some, please others, and leave the majority unmoved perhaps.

No, wait for a moment: it could not have been deliberately rushed out to rival SOUTHERN MEMOIR for reading the sleeve notes, by one NIGEL HUNTER, he refers to this being 1975!

Perhaps unnecessarily we present the full titles:

Side One:
1. Where the Blue of the Night &c.
2. When I Take my Sugar to Tea.
3. Avalon.
4. If I Could be With You.
5. Chinatown, My Chinatown.
6. Chicago.

Side Two:
1. Georgia On my Mind.
2. I'm Confessin'
3. Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.
4. Softly as in a Morning Sunrise
5. Alabamy Bound.
6. You're Driving me Crazy.

No track-by-track review as such is called for as the numbers will be well-known to most members. I'm still rather stunned at the surprise inclusion of that 1931 BLUE OF THE NIGHT; a page or so back Neil O'Brien was writing about the "tenor" of the early days and averring how he preferred the later baritone. Well, although the fact is that there is more than a quarter of a century between the making of this one track and the remain-

eleven the voice is not all that significantly different - not to my ears, anyway. The accompaniment is for sure! Buddy Cole's arrangements, while scintillating in execution with his wizardy on either the piano or the organ, were quite uncomplicated and certainly with no bizarre changes of tempo or motif. I expect this is a golden opportunity for pointing out, objectively and entirely without malice, that his album offers some beautiful changes of pace - something lacking in SOUTHERN MEMOIR.

> Blue of the Night; Georgia on my Mind; I'm Confessin', and If I Could be With You, Morning Sunrise offer satisfying change from the zip of Chinatown, Avalon, Alabamy Bound and the others.

And, for good measure, there are numbers here that I always thought deserved to get a lot more attention than they did at the time of original issue. CHICAGO for me is the version of this song; TAKE MY SUGAR TO TEA is a delight, especially with the Durante-ish aside from Bing: "What kind of tearoom is THIS?" when Buddy is giving out real cool man on the piano. Not the olde worlde tea-shoppe for certain. And the way Bing holds that extremely difficult melody of DEVIL AND DEEP BLUE SEA is a classic example of the master's work. The asides in ALABAMY BOUND sound fresh and apt, too.

Mind, there are those among us (see last issue) who still regard the 50's as recent - certainly 1957. But it is sobering to reflect that eleven of these numbers - sounding as fresh as today's bread feels - were recorded 19 years ago while the other was made no less than 35 years ago. It is easy to be trite - and say the mind boggles!

ON THE ALAMO is omitted to make way for BLUE OF THE NIGHT on this album; one wonders why. Not that BLUE is not altogether quite acceptable.

> And it may be relevant to point out at this juncture that on that day, 14 March, 1957, Bing actually recorded no less than thirteen songs! How many artists in the world of recording have ever done that, I wonder. I would stick my neck out and say - no other one!

I really feel MFP/EMI/MCA - call it what you will! - have pulled out a real plum here - and I am certain that the issuers will be delighted at the response. It is an ageless Crosby offering; nothing startlingly modern - and nothing sounding distinctly "old". A rare feat. What it is - IS HIGHLY LISTENABLE!

MFP records tend to disappear quickly; the catalogue has a high and quick turn-over. It might be a good idea, especially if it can be obtained at less than £1.25p. to get two copies of it. That would be worthwhile if only to make a wall-picture of the sleeve!

Oh, I think the sleeve notes are well worth quoting. They are as follows, with acknowledgments to MFP:

> "Harry Lillis Crosby is a walking institution. He is the man who invented crooning, to use an old but honourable definition, and he is still crooning better than anyone else in this his fiftieth year in show business.
>
> If some younger folk are wondering what crooning is all about, let them contemplate the balladeering of Andy Williams, Perry Como, Dean Martin, and a few score of that ilk. None of these worthies consciously or deliberately imitates H.L.Crosby - better known as Bing - but we don't mind betting that most of them will acknowledge allegiance to and approval of the Crosby singing style and its benign influence on them and the music business in general over the last half century.
>
> Born in Tacoma, Washington State, Bing was the fourth arrival of seven children, five boys and two girls, with a seafaring family tradition and a Roman Catholic bishop back in 1601. Bing did his fair share of making whoopee in his youth amongst pretty ladies and nice beverages in bottles, and first rose to singing prominence after college bands when he joined Paul Whiteman in the Twenties.
>
> In those days, band singers had to step forth from the ranks of the orchestra to sing, so Bing was equipped with a French horn to hold when not up frontvocalising.

His enthusiasm got the better of him, and Whiteman suffered some very dull French horn sounds before moving Bing to the string section. He wouldn't restrain himself there by just miming, either, and in the end Whiteman gave him a violin with rubber strings which he could scrape with noiseless impunity and no discords.

Later years brought film stardom - notably with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in the "Road" series - and overwhelming success on radio, TV, and records, with a total sales tally for the latter recently estimated at 400 million. And now, in 1975, with fifty years of achievement behind him, Bing is singing as well as ever he did, despite a major lung operation in 1974. Listen to this selection and enjoy the experience of a world-famous institution in action.

NIGEL HUNTER.

Apt and appropriate notes, too. Incidentally, the two sides offer a big variation in playing time - side two being considerably longthier than Side one. The lengthy versions of CONFESSIN, GEORGIA, and MORNING SUNRISE contrast with some fairly briefer ones on the reverse side of the album. This, without doubt, is a notable issue.

MEMBER BOB ROBERTS provided Christmas Bing radio shows for hospitals in his area....

FRANK MURPHY is staging all kinds of Crosby shows at HIS cinema, combined with bingo... hhmm...Bing/Bingo....

READERS ROY CHAPPELL ("TOUCH OF THE BINGS") professional singer, is likely to be heard on OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FAIRLY SOON, seen and heard - and its not impossible that he will be "sponsored" by Ken Barnes....and DICK LILLICO, Newcastle, may also be seen and heard...he's been accepted but told there is a long waiting list. Dick had never sung anywhere except in the privacy of his own home until a couple of years ago.

AND A WARM WELCOME TO new members: Rev. Geo Duffy (USA); Cab Smith returning to the fold but an "old stager"; Jurgen Jahreis, Germany; John Joyce, Gateshead; Frans W. Van der Kalft - Amsterdam, Holland; Stan Willfox, Leicester; Marc Matelart, Belgium; L. Garlinge, Deal, Kent; [illegible], Larry Zwisohn, Los Angeles; Alex. P. King, of Salford; John McColl, Shinemoor, Tyne & Wear; W.H.Ewert, Bickley, Kent; M.C.Emens, Horley, Surrey; M.F.Collins, Highgate; Tony Peverett, Surrey (happily returning to the fold!); Tom McLean, Edinburgh; Joe Forster, Lanark; F.R.Goddard, Whitton; Geo. Harwood, Huntington; Bill Huntington, Morecambe (there's a coincidence!) Les Myall, Portsmouth; Tony Neil also of Portsmouth (Southsea); Edw. Sturrup, Sunbury-on-Thames; J. Turner, Old Windsor; H.H.Witteveen, Laren (Holland); Geoff. White, Cromford (Derby) - and of course greetings to ALL our loyal members who have now been so handsomely rewarded with Bing's upsurge...not that he ever went!

ITEM "DAILY MIRROR" early March:

BING ON WARPATH:

Indians are on the warpath over a £1¼ million land deal by Bing Crosby. The Old Groaner and four pals bought a 3,000-acre site near San Dieo, California, to develop into a recreational centre.

But the land contains ancestral Indian burial grounds, and tribal leaders from the area's reservations are opposing the plans.

One of Bing's partners, Cal Rossi, said: "We are upset that the Indians feel this way - but people do need homes and leizure facilities".

Darned Apaches and Sioux...spoiling all the good Westerns! Seems Bing best get the old STAGECOACH in running order! More seriously, it sounds a worthy project and let's hope it is resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

It might be added, apropos the MFP album discussed above, that the reproduction is tremendous. But then, it always was. One of the few albums where recording is so faithful one can actually hear Bing taking his breaths!. Even more so now, and the rhythm sounds as if its in the room with you! So does Bing, for that matter.

Prompt renewal of subs. is a big help in these difficult days in keeping our Crosby flag flying vigorously. And a special word of thanks to all those who show tangibly their desire for a thriving ICC.

BING'S MESSAGE

taped; and intended for the Leeds 25th Anniversary meeting last Sept.

"Well, greetings; warmest greetings indeed to the ICC 25th Anniversary Dinner at the Mansion Hotel, Roundhay Park, Leeds...this is really a significant event, I guess...25 years, it doesn't seem possible that the organisation has been in existence that long, but not only has it been in existence it has done some tremendous work in my behalf throughout the British Isles. I really feel like I have more friends in the British Isles than I have anywhere else in the world and its all because of their loyalty, enthusiasm and support of all the members of this group - the Crosby Circle. Its the 10th annual meeting, I see, according to the legend on this ticket; I guess you've done well and ought to be congratulated on such activities. I had a great time up in Yorkshire...first time I'd been up there and I found the people of Yorkshire very kind; very anxious to show me everything that would be interesting and colourful in the vicinity. I especially liked Harrogate - its a town up there, I guess its north of Leeds - between Leeds and Ripon - that's R-I-P-O-N. I liked it because of its history, its traditions and some of the architecture, some of the old Victorian houses off the highway there. I guess you call it the motorway. And the restaurants are very good; nice places to eat and a couple of very attractive hotels. But up further North, where we did the shooting - the grouse-shooting - there's endless, beautifully coloured moors. A very exciting place to be, and the shooting - first time I've done grouse-shooting, quite the most exciting thing I've ever participated in..the grouse are fast. They come right at you like a bullet. Pretty hard to get, but Harry and I got our limit, I guess. We had lots of birds and even brought a few home. I think all this visiting was quite the most enjoyable of all my visits over there, and of course having the boys along and playing all the great Scotch (!) seaside links plus the endless inland courses and even went down to Rye to play golf, then over to Amsterdam for the Dutch Open where Nathaniel finished second with, Dal. ? - then over the Bremen for the German Open, where Nathaniel finished second with .....and Harry won a tournament at Turnbury with Tony Horton - and I was able to win a match for the United States against the British at Gleneagles partnering Tom Weiskopf..of course, with a partner like Tom you don't have to do much else except appear... He's such a great player.

We had a home in England for a month and was really great sport for us; it was near Holland Park Avenue and everything was accessible, not only for the theatrical district of London, but when you live that far west from the business district of London you're within easy distance of Sunningdale, the Royal Berkshire, Wentworth and Ascot area... (phone bells rings...) Bing resumes: "...that was the telephone bell just interrupted me for a minute; it rings constantly since I've been home..lots of things have to be done, lot of loose ends have to be picked up..and we're slowly sorting them out. When I'm away from California for such a long period - it was almost 2½ months - things really do accumulate and it takes quite a bit of time to get it organised again when I have some free time. Well, I certainly got a lot of exposure during the trip to England. All the radio shows I guested on, television shows, the Parkinson, the Very Lynn, the Stars for Sunday show - and I taped a Disney Christmas show, coming up I believe.. AND OF COURSE I MADE A RECORD OF MARK TWAIN'S 'TOM SAWYER'. THIS WAS QUITE A CHORE, IT TOOK SIX OR SEVEN HOURS, READING THE WHOLE BOOK FOR THE DECCA RECORD CO. SEEMS THEY HAVE A PROJECT ON WHERE THEY'RE TAKING SOME OF THE OLD CLASSICS LIKE SOME OF TWAIN'S AND OTHER AUTHOR'S WORK AND THEY'RE HAVING ACTORS READ THE BOOK AND THEY ADD MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS AND SO FORTH. AND, I HAVEN'T HEARD THE THING WITH THE SOUND EFFECTS BUT THEY TELL ME THE FINISHED THING IS QUITE AN INTERESTING PIECE OF ENTERTAINMENT.

I guess people are probably sick of hearing about me in England; I was in the papers often and on the radio a good deal. Generally the interviewers asked the same questions and the interviews themselves are quite similar, and it must be getting a little overdone. But there were some great fellas to work with, fellas like Wogan, Brian Willey, people like that who really do intelligent interviews...cover the ground and really seem to know what they're doing; Parkinson's fun to work with, and he has a good production crew. Richard Drewitt, tremendously capable and knows what he wants to do and gets it done with the minimum effort and expense. Well, I've gone on long enough; I did want to say 'Hello' to all of you and congratulate you and wish you a festive evening..

..and a nice dinner party. Isee you're booked from 3pm to 10.30pm..this should give the pub a pretty good beating..take it easy now..love to you all....this is Bing."

Editor: I've used dots to convey the way that Bing spoke all this in his easy, conversational way. A lovely tape which is sure to be made available to all by and by.

Finally, KEN MERRY, 8 Lake Rd., Woodlands, Doncaster, S. Yorks (this letter, alas, is long delayed but retains its interest): A reluctant writer, I have been waiting for someone not so reluctant to mention an interesting reference to Bing on radio 2 earlier in 1975. Seeing no mention I must assume no-one else heard it! Teddy Johnson on the now-finished THE VOCAL TOUCH programme taped an interview with Sam Coslow who was one of the first successful songwriters to leave Broadway for Hollywood. He told Teddy Johnson that he had a contract with Paramount in the early 30's and he heard Bing singing in a night-club in Los Angles. He was so impressed that he took the head of Paramount to hear Bing. Later they went to see him in his dressing-room and offered him a contract Bing thought for a while then said he would want 100 dollars a week (or it may have been 200). This figure in America's depression time was quite large so the head of Paramount declined. Sam Coslow said a year later they had to give Bing a contract for a lot, LOT, more.

All my life I have lived near Doncaster and am there several times a week but I have never been to the world-famous international horse-races. For years it was common local news that Bing was at the St. Leger meetings. Yet it never occurred to me to go and get a snapshot of Bing. A close acquaintance of mine was informing me, quite by chance the other week, that some years ago he was employed at the Punch Hotel where Bing used to stay during his St. Leger sojourn. This chap often served Bing and remains full of praise for him. He also informed me that Bing was offered the Royal Box by the racing authorities, but Bing declined and stated that he was sure the people did not want to see an ageing actor there - and proceeded to take up a more modest position to watch the races. When Bing left the hotel, he left a tip for EACH of the hotel's employees.

And did you catch Alan Dell's BIG BAND SOUND (1975 again). Alan was interviewing George Simon who wrote the opus on the Big bands, and the latter described how Bing was not comfortable with the arrangement for one of the songs to be recorded. He sent for Sy Oliver, well known jazz musician of course as well as arranger/composer. Sy made a new arrangement, the song was recorded and became a hit. Bing was so pleased he offered to repay Sy by recording one of his, Sy's, numbers...all Bing's records at the time were hits, said George Simon. Sy Oliver sent YES INDEED! and Bing recorded it with Connee Boswell - but this record was not a hit. The song had to wait for a famous Big Band in the 'Forties to make it a hit...

That Bing's and Connee's YES INDEED was not a hit puzzles me. I have always thought it delightful...remember Bing with his calculated casual ad-libbing: "Has you got it? Miss Constance....has you got it?" And Connee replies with delightful humour: "You KNOWS I'ze got it Mr. Bingstance..."

Editor: Pity Ken's a reluctant writer when he produces such chatty, informative, and interesting pieces! Trust Bing to turn down the Royal Box. He would have graced it!

As always, we reach the end of an issue with reluctance, and a fear of all the things we should have used and have not....like the Honours List effort. Nothing doing in the New Year's list...but at least, the authorities have heard from some solid citizens that they feel Bing SHOULD be so honoured. Scores of other interesting letters necessarily held over....

But this IS the end of Issue 41; to all those who have been writing thinking they have been forgotten, ignored, overlooked, discarded - not so! This issue cannot really reach you before March 16 - but I'm doing my best!

Have a nice time - with you again in June... Watch out for those new records - and BING IN BRITAIN AGAIN SOON!